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ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation investigates the Student Success Project (SSP) at the fictitiously named Bay Community College, a single-campus district in Southern California. The project was initiated in response to the high probationary, disqualified and dropout rates among first-time students. Its goal was to implement interventions to help students attain a higher level of student involvement, and social and academic integration, thus helping them achieve greater academic success. SSP students attended a special orientation, a number of out-of-class study activities sponsored by the project, and received academic and career counseling. The findings indicated that students enrolled in an SSP freshman composition class succeeded at a rate of 95%, compared to 68% of the control group, or those not involved in the project. They also achieved significantly higher grade point averages. The author notes that Bay Community College has an outstanding reputation as a transfer institution, and is part of the highly regarded California community college system--yet it has a high probationary rate (37% of first-time students ended their semester on probation in 1997). Thus, he suggests, the open-door policy of the community college must also involve aggressive academic support components like SSP, to ensure the success of students of all backgrounds and abilities. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/NS)

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Community Colleges:
Open Door or Revolving Door?

Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Probationary Students and Increase Student Persistence

John Manuel Gonzalez
University of California, Los Angeles

2000

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Community Colleges:

Open Door or Revolving Door?

Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Probationary Students and Increase Student Persistence

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

John Manuel Gonzalez

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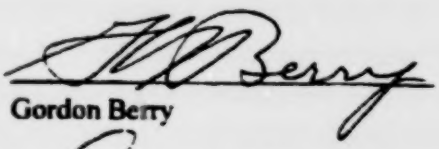

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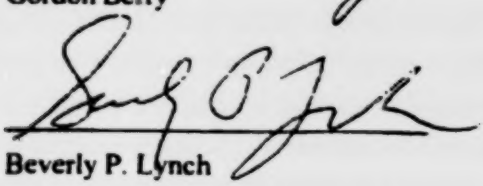

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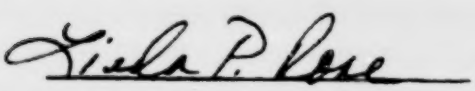

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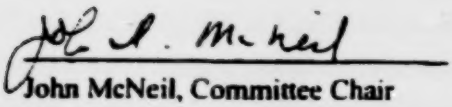

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Jesus and Francisca Gonzalez, in recognition of the sacrifices they made to ensure that I reach my potential. I owe everything I have accomplished to them. Finishing this work became more challenging after my father's passing in January 1999. However, his memory has been a source of strength and inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS xii

VITA xiii

ABSTRACT xv

CHAPTER 1 – PROBLEM STATEMENT 1

The Problem 1
Background 6
A Case Study 9
Significance 10
Action Plan 15
Questions 17

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW 18

Institutional Departure 19
Historical Perspective 21
Recent Trends 25
Student Success Seminars 25
Teaching and Learning Approaches 29

CHAPTER 3 – DESIGN AND METHODS 32

Questions 32
Purpose 32
Site 33
Sample 40

Interventions 41
Orientation 41
English Classes 48
Human Development 20 52
Academic Counseling 53
Activities 54
Career Advising 55
Mentoring 56
Collaborators 57
Responsibilities 59
Fall '97 59
Spring '98 59
Summer '98 62
Fall '98 and Spring '99 63
I 63
English Faculty 63
General Faculty 63
Counselors 63
Counseling Aides 64
Subgroups 64
Group 1 65
Group 2 65
Group 3 65
Group 4 65
Group 5 65
Group 6 66
Group 7 66
Group 8 66
Group 9 66
Group 10 66
Control Group 66
Evaluation Measures 68
Orientation Evaluations 69
Grade Point Average (GPA) 71
Success Rate 71
Probationary Rates 72

Persistence Rate 72
Deans' Honor List 72
CCSEQ (Community College Student Experiences Questionnaire) 72
In-depth Interviews 74
English Teachers' Journals 75
Students' Essays 75

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS 77

Quantitative Data Analysis 77
Study vs. Control Group Comparisons 77
Orientation Evaluation 79
Question 1 79
Grade Point Average 87
Deans' Honor List 88
Probationary Rate 88
Success Rate 91
English 1 91
English 21A 92
Human Development 20 92
Persistence Rate 92
Student Success Project Interventions 93
Orientation 94
English 1 96
English 21A 97
Human Development 20 99
Academic Counseling 99
Activities 101
CCSEQ 102
Qualitative Data Analysis 114
Questions 119
Question 2 119
Academic Adjustment 120
Environmental Adjustment 121
Lack of Familiarity with the System 122
Isolation 122

Commuting 126
Job Responsibilities 127
Question 3 132
English 1 133
Setting the Tone 134
Collaborative Learning Approaches 136
Effects of Collaborative Learning Approaches 146
English 21A 148

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION 158

Summary 158
Questions for Future Research 160
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research 161
The Site 161
Length of the Study 162
Study and Control Sample Size 162
Data 163
Orientation Process 164
Teaching Strategies 166
Academic Counseling 166
Activities 168
Recommendations 168
Local Recommendations 169
Professional/Statewide Recommendations 181
Conclusion 185

Appendix A

Orientation Agenda 187

Appendix B

SSP Orientation Evaluation 189

Appendix C

12

Control Group Orientation Evaluation 191

Appendix D

Control Group Orientation Evaluation Cover Letter 194

Appendix E

CCSEQ Cover Letter 195

Appendix F

In-depth Interview Protocol 196

Appendix G

In-depth Interview Consent Form 202

Appendix H

Sample Student Essay, English 1 206

Appendix I

Student Success Project Consent Form 210

Appendix J

Orientation Case Studies 214

Appendix K

SSP Description Script 218

REFERENCES 221

LIST OF TABLES

Page

1.1 Probationary/Disqualified Students, Bay Community College, Spring '97 10

1.2 Persistence for Probationary and Disqualified Students, BCC, Spring '97to Fall '97 11

1.3 Effect of Human Development 20 on Persistence, Success, Academic Achievement, and Retention 14

3.1 BCC Student Classification, Fall '98 34

3.2 Ethnic Composition at BCC, Fall '98 35

3.3 City's Ethnic Composition, 1990 36

3.4 Persistence at BCC 39

3.5 English Levels at BCC 49

3.6 Collaborators, Spring '98 57

3.7 Collaborators, Summer '98 57

3.8 Collaborators, Orientation 58

3.9 Collaborators, Fall '98 58

3.10 Collaborators, Spring '99 58

3.11 Study Sample Subgroups 67

4.1 Study vs. Control Sample Gender Group Cross-tabulation 78

4.2 Study vs. Control Sample Ethnic and Gender Comparisons 78

4.3 Orientation Evaluation Data 80

4.4 Orientation Video—Usefulness and Enjoyment Levels 83

4.5 Developing a Student Educational Plan—Usefulness and Enjoyment Levels 84

4.6 GPA – Study vs. Control Group 88

4.7 Other Success Measures 89

4.8 BCC Historical Persistence Data for All First-time College Students 93

4.9 BCC Historical Persistence Data for First Time Full-time College Students 93

4.10 GPAs for SSP Subgroups 94

4.11 Academic Counseling Topics 100

4.12 CCSEQ: Gender Distribution, Study and Control Group 104

4.13 CCSEQ: Age Distribution, Study and Control Group 105

4.14 CCSEQ: Ethnic Distribution, Study and Control Group 106

4.15 Learning and Study Skills Items: Percentages of Responses 107

4.16 CCSEQ: Faculty Activities Items: Percentages of Responses 109

4.17 CCSEQ: Estimate of Gains Items: Percentages of Responses 111

4.17 (Continued) CCSEQ: Estimate of Gains Items: Percentages of Responses 112

4.18 In-depth Interviewees—Demographic Data 115

4.19 In-depth Interviewees—Academic Data 116

4.20 In-depth Interview Non-Respondents—Demographic Data 117

4.21 In-depth Interview Non-Respondents—Academic Data 118

4.22 Sample Interview Index Card, Side A 135

4.23 Sample Interview Index Card, Side B 135

5.1 Student Success Project Collaborators 172

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Gonzalez, John, How Santa Monica College serves the Hispanic community throughout Santa Monica and Los Angeles County, Paper presented at the 13th HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities) Annual Conference, Miami, FL, October 30-November 2, 1999.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Community Colleges:

Open Door or Revolving Door?

Intervention Strategies to Reduce the Number of Probationary Students and Increase Student Persistence

by

John Manuel Gonzalez

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2000

Professor John McNeil, Chair

While promoting access to higher education, the open door policy of community colleges also presents some serious challenges in advocating student success. Students and institutions alike face these challenges from the outset in attempting to overcome high probationary and low persistence rates. At the root of these two indicators are

several factors, such as the diversity of community college student bodies, which includes a variety of learning styles of non-traditional students, their diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and the institution's inability to adjust to these differences. This institutional disconnect is reflected in the absence of student involvement and the tendency to perpetuate teacher or lecture-centered approaches.

The Student Success Project (SSP) was initiated in response to the high probationary, disqualified, and dropout rates among first-time students at Bay Community College (BCC). The goal of SSP was to implement interventions designed to help first-time college students achieve a higher level of student involvement, and social and academic integration, and thus avoid academic difficulties.

A control and a study group were randomly selected from the cohort of Fall '98 first-time college students whose goal was to transfer.

The students in the study group were invited to attend a special orientation that emphasized collaborative and student participatory techniques and de-emphasized the lecture-centered approach.

In addition to orientation, students could enroll in specially designed English and human development (student success seminar) classes that promoted collaborative approaches and de-emphasized the teacher-centered method. SSP students also received

academic and career counseling. Finally, the project sponsored a number of out-of-class activities related to in-class assignments.

Measures used to determine the effectiveness of the interventions included GPA (grade point average), the Dean's Honor List, probationary and persistence rates, and success rates in SSP classes. The quantitative data was triangulated with qualitative data, such as in-depth student interviews, teachers' journals, and student portfolios.

The findings indicated that students who enrolled in SSP English 1 (Freshman Composition) succeeded at a 95% rate vs. 68% for the control group. Finally, students who participated in two or more activities earned a 2.51 GPA vs. 1.98 for those who did not participate in any activities.

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

I. The Problem

Although the open door policy of the community college ensures access, at the end of the first term some students face a reality check. Because they may be underprepared academically, lack a support network, or lack the advice necessary to succeed at the college level, a high percentage of community college students experience academic difficulties at the end of their first semester.

Bay Community College (BCC), a fictitious name, provides a telling example. This one-campus district in Southern California, with its outstanding reputation as a premier transfer institution to both the University of California (UC) and the California State University (Cal State) systems, has a high probationary rate. In Fall, 1997, 651 or 37.1% of 1,757 first-time college students, whose goal was to transfer, ended the semester on academic or lack-of-progress probation or both. Of these 651 students, 224 or 34.4% did not re-enroll for Spring, 1998. Data from two other single-campus community college districts, located in the same metropolitan area as Bay Community College, show a similar pattern. In Fall, 1996 at Grande Community College (also a pseudonym), 886 out of 2,565 or 34.5% of first-time college students ended the semester on probation. Similarly, in Fall, 1997, 841 or 34.2% of 2,460 first-time college students ended the semester on probation. These data show that the high percentage of probationary first-time college students at BCC is most likely typical of other community colleges throughout the state, and possibly across the country. It should be noted that the California community college system is considered one of the premier systems in the country.

What are the causes of this persistence problem? Community colleges represent the democratization of higher education. They were established for the purpose of providing access to higher education for the masses. They are, for the most part, commuter colleges. Community college students are of a lower socio-economic status, generally speaking (Cohen, 1996), and often work to support themselves and pay for their college expenses. Consequently, working students—especially those who work off-campus—can ill afford to spend more time on campus than necessary. As a result of their out-of-school commitments and responsibilities, working college students generally do not participate in out-of-class activities.

Vincent Tinto (1993) views college as a collection of communities. He contends that students who feel connected to one of those communities have a better chance of succeeding than those who do not. Alexander Astin (1993) found that students' cognitive and affective development, as well as their persistence, is positively affected by their level of involvement. As stated earlier, many community college students work, and hence, are unable to participate in out-of-class activities. Consequently, they have fewer opportunities to connect to the available college communities. It is not surprising, then, that a high percentage of first-time community college students find themselves in academic difficulty at the end of their first semester. Their economic situation limits them almost exclusively to in-class involvement. It would appear, therefore, that an intervention aiming to increase first-time college student persistence and success would need to include the opportunity for involvement.

Student involvement in his or her personal and academic development is key to having a successful learning experience. As I indicated earlier, involvement can positively affect student development in both the cognitive and affective domains. Given the array of learning styles that community college students bring with them, including visual, auditory, social, and kinesthetic, student-involvement opportunities must be planned with all learners

in mind. Every student contact represents an opportunity for student involvement, be it with instructors and counselors at orientation, or with instructors both in and out of the classroom, or with staff. According to Tinto,

> The more students are involved academically and socially, the more likely are they to become more involved in their own learning and invest time and energy to learn.... Involvement, especially academic involvement, seems to generate heightened student effort. That effort, in turn, leads to enhanced learning. As to the latter, we also know that student learning is linked to persistence.... Other things being equal, the more students learn, the more likely are they to persist, even after controlling for student attributes. (Tinto, 1993, p. 131)

The type of student involvement that Tinto refers to calls for the collaboration between academic and student affairs. Student success, in its general definition, is the responsibility of everyone on a college campus. This responsibility begins at the gates of the college with parking attendants greeting and directing students, and ends with the individual handing out diplomas and certificates at the end of the line. Key players in this process are instructional faculty since they appear to have the most contact and consequently, the most impact on a student's progress through the educational environment, especially one that purports to be democratic.

The community colleges' open-access policy illustrates the effort to attain democratization. It ensures that students from different backgrounds, educational and otherwise, with a variety of goals, learning capacities, and a myriad of learning styles, view these learning institutions as a means to further their education. Also, given the fact that community colleges are relatively inexpensive, it follows that ethnic minorities, and those who are less prepared academically, would seek to strengthen their preparation for either academe or the world of work at these institutions.

Democratization has not reached all levels of the community college, however. Teaching possesses the traditional attributes of higher education. The minimum qualifications for teaching at a community college include a master's degree but not a

teaching credential; consequently, very few community college teachers undergo teacher training. A lack of teacher preparation means that a community college teacher, more often than not, relies mostly on the lecture method for the delivery of instruction. The lecture method is viewed as a deficit approach to teaching (Shor, 1992). Although it provides for the quickest delivery of information, the lecture method assumes that students arrive on campus with no knowledge but an understanding of language. Furthermore, the lecture method promotes a passive student role, thus allowing very little student participation and interaction. This in turn promotes a feeling of resistance, resentment and low self-esteem on the part of students.

Given the diverse learning styles that community college students bring to the classroom, it would appear that an intervention whose goal is to increase student involvement would have to include a pedagogy that promotes participatory types of activities such as collaborative learning. This type of pedagogy delivers a strong message to students that learning is engaging and exciting, and promotes an exploratory and creative approach. It also values the diverse cultures contained within the classroom and the students' contribution to the development of curriculum (Shor, 1992).

The high cost of higher education makes it impossible to provide the same level of quality education for the millions of community college students that is found at state-sponsored universities, let alone private institutions. Although the goal of making higher education accessible to the masses is noble, the numbers of students vis-à-vis the resources available dictate the quality of services. This quality varies from district to district and from campus to campus.

New student orientation is one such service. Although it is required by Title 5 of the Education Code, orientation varies in duration and quality from one campus to another. In some colleges, academic counselors facilitate orientation and in others paraprofessionals conduct it under the supervision of an academic counselor or an administrator. At some

campuses academic counselors may provide orientation in a very systematic fashion with scripts that ensure quality and uniformity of information. At other campuses, student services personnel may take a more informal and haphazard approach. Because of the large numbers of students who pass through community college gates on a yearly basis and the limited resources, the delivery method of choice is the lecture approach. In an effort to become more universally accessible, some community colleges are pilot testing new student orientation on the Web. Although these methods expedite the delivery of information, they minimize student-to-staff contact, thus reducing the opportunity for student connectedness. In orientations where the lecture method is employed, the students adopt the role of passive observers rather than active participants in the learning process. Because orientation represents a unique opportunity for students to connect with faculty, staff, and each other, student services personnel and faculty who participate in it, play a crucial role in setting the tone for the type of educational experience that community college students will have.

Orientation, as the first activity in which new students participate, is a powerful tool that is used, whether consciously or unconsciously, to acculturate new students to the institution.

> Introducing students to available support services, key administrators, student social life, and major and degree requirements, as well as their early course registrations, is important for students and institutions. If these introductions define an orientation program, however, then once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to orient students to the institution's intellectual and cultural life and values may be lost. Intentionally or not, institutional values are on display during orientation, and the program's activities send subtle but powerful messages to new students about what and who is valued (and not valued) on a campus. (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 650)

New student orientation is the first contact that students have with the institution and its personnel. Therefore, it represents a unique opportunity for student services personnel, faculty and staff to ensure that students feel welcome, are informed about services, policies and procedures that will help them succeed, and feel connected to someone or something at the institution from the outset. Feeling connected, in turn, can potentially contribute to

student persistence and success. Employing a participatory approach can accomplish this feeling of connectedness. At a new student orientation the most obvious connection possible is student-to-student. Orientation personnel can facilitate this connection by helping the participants to establish a rapport based on trust and by creating an atmosphere that is safe for students to begin to share thoughts and feelings. This can be accomplished by asking students incisive questions such as: What do you expect to get out of orientation? What are your biggest hopes and fears/concerns as you begin your college education? Having students briefly discuss their answers to these and other engaging questions can demonstrate to the participants that they are not alone in their experience, that other students share their hopes and concerns, thus establishing the desired connection.

II. Background

The various functions of the community college system have evolved through the years. Some have developed as the institutions respond to the needs of both society at large and the communities they serve. Other functions have been established, modified, and regulated through legislation.

In fiscal year 1959-1960 the State of California adopted the California Master Plan, which had as a goal to provide access to undergraduate education. The California Master Plan aimed to define the role of, and differentiate between the functions of the three segments of higher education in the state—the University of California, the California State University, and the community colleges. The basic role of the community colleges in relation to the other two systems under the California Master Plan was to provide lower-division education in order to prepare students to transfer to UC and Cal State.

The open-access policy espoused by community colleges, in an attempt to educate students with different levels of academic preparation, learning styles, socioeconomic status and interests, is accompanied by the inevitable "revolving door" syndrome. This

revolving-door syndrome is reflected in the large number of students who leave or drop out without achieving their goals. In 1960 Burton Clark wrote about the "cooling out function" of the community colleges, which is an attempt to assist students with the process of accepting a goal below that of transfer as a result of lack of academic preparation. In the late 1990s the cooling out function is still in effect at community colleges in California. And it will continue to play a crucial role in the process of channeling students out of the transfer track and into vocational/occupational programs. Because the children of baby boomers are reaching college age, the cooling out function's role will most likely expand in the coming years. The second tidal wave of baby boomers means that more 18-20 year olds will be attending college. Given the small growth in Cal State campuses and the zero growth in UC campuses in the last 30 years, together with the impending restrictions on basic skills admissions requirements at the Cal State system, community colleges are bound to see an unprecedented growth in the next few years. This projected growth will place an added strain on an already stretched system.

Unfortunately, an unknown number of would-be community college students do not persist long enough to feel the effects of the "cooling out" function. Since community colleges are not required to maintain data on student enrollment until the official census date, data reflecting the number of students who become discouraged prior to this critical point is not available. The official census date is the day after the "drop" deadline, which is the last day that students are able to drop a class without it ever appearing on their transcripts. At BCC the census date is usually Monday of the third week of the semester. Should these data ever become available, the state, the public, and college personnel would then have a more realistic picture of the severity of the "discouraged" student problem.

In 1986 the California legislature adopted Senate Bill 3, also known as the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act. This bill requires that all community colleges in the state provide support services such as orientation, counseling, assessment, follow-up, etc.,

to ensure that students attain their academic goals in a reasonable amount of time. A recent statement from the Student Services and Special Programs Division of the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges defines matriculation as "a process that enhances student access to the California Community Colleges and promotes and sustains the efforts of students to be successful in their educational endeavors." The state began to partially fund these student support services in 1987 and required each college to match the funds on a three-to-one ratio. Although the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges provides guidelines for the implementation of matriculation services, each district is allowed some leeway as to implementation. This latitude explains the inconsistencies described above in new student orientation from one campus to another.

In the late 1980s California community colleges came under scrutiny as a result of the low number of students actually transferring to state-funded colleges and universities. In response to public pressure and in an effort to strengthen the transfer function of the community college, California began to fund transfer centers. In spite of some successes, the number of students transferring to four-year colleges and universities remains relatively low.

In an effort to make community colleges accountable, a number of states have recently shown an inclination toward performance-based funding. California is in the beginning stages of implementation. A program called Partnership for Excellence is prompting the Chancellor's Office and the community colleges to conduct studies to determine what measures to consider in determining institutional effectiveness. Under Partnership for Excellence the state has identified five indicators for the initial year of implementation. These five indicators fall in the following areas: transfer, degree and certificate completion, successful course completion, workforce preparation/economic development, and basic skills. In a memorandum dated December 1, 1998, from the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, Thomas J. Nussbaum, to the Board of

Governors, Nussbaum expresses his commitment to augment the goals and measures currently being implemented. Among the future goals, the Chancellor includes term-to-term persistence. Although overall term-to-term persistence signifies a positive step, given that probationary rates present a problem for community colleges, tracking the number of probationary students and their persistence would be viable effectiveness measures. Using probationary rates to measure institutional effectiveness would be a neutral and impartial criterion. Whether a college favors its transfer or its vocational/occupational function, probationary and term-to-term persistence rates are objective measures that apply equally to both functions. These rates could potentially reflect not only the overall effectiveness of the institution, but they also could provide a measure of effectiveness of college-wide programs such as orientation, counseling, and follow-up. The effectiveness of these and other programs, including faculty development and teaching approaches, must be measured and tracked since they can potentially contribute toward student persistence and eventually to student success.

III. A Case Study

Semester-to-semester persistence is the number or percentage of students that re-enroll at the same institution the following semester. Probation, however, is a more technical term and requires a more detailed explanation.

There are two types of probation: academic and lack-of-progress. A student is placed on academic probation whenever his or her grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0 for any given semester. A student is classified as being on lack-of-progress probation when he or she fails to complete at least 50% of the units that he or she enrolls in for any given semester. Some students may be placed on both academic and lack-of-progress probation. A probationary student who fails to improve his or her academic standing in the subsequent semester is disqualified, which means that, technically, he or she cannot re-

enroll the following semester. Disqualified students, however, may petition to be re-admitted. A counselor reviews each petition, and, if necessary, meets with the student to determine the conditions under which the student is re-admitted.

Table 1.1 Probationary/Disqualified Students, Bay Community College, Spring '97

Status	Acad. & LOP Spring '97	Acad. Only Spring '97	LOP Only Spring '97	Total
New Probationary	360	1,369	1,166	2,895
Continuing	207	1,653	422	2,282
Disqualified	228	459	852	1,539
Total	**795**	**3,481**	**2,440**	**6,716**

"LOP" stands for lack-of-progress. "Acad." stands for academic probation. "New Probationary" means that a student is placed on probation for the first time. "Continuing" means that a student was classified as probationary the previous semester of enrollment. "Disqualified" means that a student is denied the right to re-enroll after having been on either academic and/or lack-of-progress probation for at least one prior semester. Disqualified students have the right to petition for re-admission.

Table 1.1 indicates the breakdown by category of Bay Community College (BCC) students who were placed on either probationary or disqualified status as of the end of Spring '97. Table 1.2 below illustrates the number and percentage of probationary and disqualified students at the end of Spring '97 who re-enrolled at Bay Community College for Fall '97.

IV. Significance

Table 1.2 shows that a substantial percentage of students who are in some type of academic difficulty drop out, with persistence rates ranging between 34% and 68%. A study conducted from 1993 to 1995 indicates that the persistence rate for those three years

for the general student population at BCC was 68%. The results of this study, together with the current data, seem to support the theory that BCC students who experience academic difficulty persist at a much lower rate than the general student population as a whole. However, the obstacles that prevent students from persisting have not been fully studied and efforts to reverse the trend have been limited.

Table 1.2 Persistence for Probationary and Disqualified Students, BCC, Spring '97 to Fall '97

Status	Acad. & LOP Spring '97	Persist Fall '97	%	Acad. Only Spring '97	Persist Fall '97	%	LOP Only Spring '97	Persist Fall '97	%
New	360	179	50%	1,369	645	47%	1,166	511	44%
Continue	207	140	68%	1,653	880	53%	422	268	64%
Disqual.	228	96	42%	459	216	47%	852	286	34%
Total/ Mean	795	415	52%	3,481	1,741	50%	2,440	1,065	44%

The recent economic upswing in California means that community colleges will receive additional funding that can be earmarked for growth. Even though Bay Community College draws students from relatively distant areas, and is enrolled to near capacity, the administration wants to garner new growth funding available from Sacramento. By offering a flexible class schedule, BCC has increased student enrollment. It has expanded class offerings in the winter session and on weekends. Also, it offers classes that begin and end at various intervals instead of traditional times. An on-going marketing campaign portrays BCC as accessible and affordable. In addition to expanding its class offerings, the college has allocated resources to its outreach office, which is responsible for student recruitment, both in and out-of-state. It seems reasonable that some resources dedicated for

recruitment of new students could be directed toward retention of existing students to decrease the high attrition rates, especially for probationary students. Successfully reducing attrition would mean that BCC would not have to invest as much in the recruitment of new students. Further, increasing retention and persistence rates could potentially contribute toward enhancing student success, thus reducing the revolving door syndrome.

In order to lessen the revolving door syndrome, BCC could implement measures to prevent students from going on probation, or it could institute programs to enforce probationary policies, or it could do both. Preventive measures include providing students in good academic standing with the necessary strategies, such as note taking and test taking skills, and time management. Enforcement measures are prescriptive in nature and apply to requirements placed on probationary students hoping that they will return to good standing. Some of those requirements may include limiting probationary students to a certain number of units, or requiring them to attend study skills workshops or to enroll in basic skills courses.

After many years of discussions and as a result of recent campus research, BCC created a retention committee to study the causes and explore possible solutions to academic difficulties. The membership of the retention committee consists predominantly of members of the Counseling Department, with the exception of one adjunct instructional faculty member and an intern from the office of the vice president of academic affairs. The make up of the committee dictated the types of measures that could be considered. It limited the committee's scope. The committee considered implementing measures that fall exclusively in the area of student affairs, and it discounted programs that viewed academic affairs relevant to student retention. This tactical error perpetuated the mind set that student success is the responsibility of student affairs personnel and not a collective one. In academic year 1998-99, the retention committee conducted a survey of students on

academic probation. To date, the results of the survey have not been tabulated. In addition to the survey, the Counseling Department instituted a voluntary contract for probationary students. Both of these measures address probation after the fact; they do nothing to prevent the problem.

In terms of preventive measures, BCC developed and institutionalized a student success seminar titled Human Development 20. This course is based on the freshman seminar that was first developed by the Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina. The purpose of this course is to provide an extended orientation for first-time college students to help them with the adjustment process through discussions of potential problems and exploration of solution strategies. The course description for Human Development 20 reads as follows:

> Students will learn how they, as individuals, relate to their educational process, their college, the community, and society as a whole. This course will provide an examination of the history and significance of higher education and explore areas essential to academic success such as critical thinking, learning styles, decision making, effective communication and the student as an **active learner**. [Emphasis added.]

A small number of instructional and counseling faculty have undergone pedagogical training to teach this course, and the number of sections has increased from two in Spring, 1998 to 24 in Fall, 1999. Methodologically, this course emphasizes collaborative learning.

The institutional researcher at BCC conducted a data analysis in Fall '98 with a study and a control group to determine the effect of the Human Development 20 course on persistence, success, and retention. The study group included students from the present study, and the control group was randomly matched for gender, ethnicity, and age from all students not in the present study who did not enroll in the course. Using a one-tailed significance test, the study yielded the following results (Table 1.3):

- Students in the study group, those who enrolled in Human Development 20, persisted at a higher rate than students in the control group from Fall '98 to Spring '99.

- No statistically significant difference existed between the two groups in regards to success and retention rates.
- Students in the study group earned a higher statistical GPA than students in the control group. The statistical GPA is the average of the individual students' GPA.
- Students in the study group also appear to have a higher real GPA than students in the control group. The real GPA is the sum of the grade points divided by the sum of the units attempted.

Table 1.3 Effect of Human Development 20 on Persistence, Success Academic Achievement, and Retention

	N	Persist	Success	Retention	Real GPA	Stat GPA	St Dev GPA
Study Group	242	76.0%	53.3%	76.8%	2.30	1.95	1.27
Control Group	242	62.4%	53.6%	77.0%	2.14	1.60	1.37
z		3.250	-0.067	-0.116		2.67	
Significance		Yes	No	No		yes	

This analysis shows that the Human Development 20 course appears to make a contribution in the areas of academic achievement, as indicated by the higher GPA of the students in the study group, and in the area of persistence. Although the reasons for this positive effect is not clear, the study skills taught in these courses, along with the pedagogy employed, are two likely reasons. The institution needs to conduct further studies to determine the effect of these courses on probationary students.

The opportunities to institutionalize preventive measures exist in other areas as well. The growth funding from Sacramento described earlier, contributed to the hiring of 88 new faculty members from fiscal 1997-1998 to 1999-2000. This growth equaled 29% of the tenure track faculty at BCC. The influx of new faculty represents an opportunity to provide professional development for a substantial percentage of the instructors. By acquiring alternative methods of delivering instruction, the faculty could become professionally

stimulated and sensitized to their role in student success. Professional development opportunities could promote the use of effective approaches that encourage the students' participation in their educational development.

Just as in the choice between enforcement vs. preventive probationary policies, BCC had the choice of involving instructional or counseling faculty or both. Unlike the retention committee whose influence was limited by its narrow composition, both instructional and counseling faculty have taught the freshman seminars or Human Development 20 courses. In some cases, faculty dyads, one from instruction and one from counseling, have collaborated to teach them. Collaboration between these two areas has invaluable institutional benefits. First, it establishes communication between student and academic affairs; these two entities discover that many of their concerns about student success overlap. Second, they learn much from each other; what each of them does stops being a mystery to the other, and the level of respect for one another's part in student success is heightened. Third, each side re-discovers that they can accomplish much by collaborating. And fourth, they view student success as a collective effort.

V. Action Plan

The large numbers of probationary and disqualified students at BCC, as in many community colleges, are compelling; the temptation is strong to address their needs. However, this researcher believes in preventive measures. Consequently, I proposed a pilot study that would aim to prevent first-time college-students from going on probation at the end of their first semester. The study would be based on student involvement, faculty and student interaction, social and academic integration, and collaborative learning.

Community colleges present an almost insurmountable challenge to implementing retention and persistence strategies based on student involvement: most institutions are commuter colleges. Because most community colleges do not have residential facilities,

students have less time to get involved and show less of an institutional commitment. In addition, other factors associated with the student populations at community colleges—including socioeconomic status, commuting problems, off-campus job responsibilities, and family obligations—reduce the amount of time that students have available for involvement.

Even though student involvement at community colleges is limited compared to residential colleges, some existing opportunities should be utilized. Some of these opportunities include new student orientation, student life, and in- and out-of-class activities. When orchestrated properly, these activities have the potential to enable the student to achieve social and academic integration, which is a critical factor in persistence. According to Tinto, "Though the presence of interaction does not by itself guarantee persistence, the absence of interaction almost always enhances the likelihood of departure." (1993, p. 117)

The orientation process is crucial in ensuring student success, especially at commuter institutions. Orientation is the students' first, and often their only, opportunity to "connect" with someone at the institution—be it a counselor, a faculty member, an administrator, or other students. Feeling connected and knowing where to find student support when needed enhances students' probability of persisting, especially at large institutions. Orientation is also the institution's opportunity to deliver a message to new students that goes beyond disseminating policies and procedures; the message is a powerful statement about the values of the institution in regards to quality and equality.

> Quality and equality are those intangibles that some might see as essential to "leveling the playing field." One of those levelers might well be orientation—a critical entryway into the college. The at-risk student, perhaps even more than the traditional student, requires a careful orientation into what is essentially a new world.... In light of the increasing diversity among their student populations, it is curious that there is so little evidence that community colleges value, much less require, strong orientation programs. (Roueche and Roueche 1993, p. 132)

Promoting student success requires an examination of institutional practices beyond orientation as well. Given the commuter nature of community colleges and the reality that the majority of a community college student's time is spent in the classroom, teaching strategies and pedagogy also need to be reviewed. The purpose of this review is to ensure that a student's culture and participation in his or her own development are valued in order to avoid resistance, which leads to disenfranchisement and withdrawal.

VI. Questions

In this study, I proposed to answer the following questions:

1. What effect do collaborative learning approaches used in orientation have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?
2. What are some of the factors that prevent some community college students from succeeding?
3. What effect do collaborative learning approaches used in English classes have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

> The appalling fact is that **only one-half of the students who enter the college gates as freshmen will ever leave those gates as graduates**. Studies show that in many institutions **from one-third to one-half of the freshman class drops out in the first year**. Not only does this represent a national loss, but it is also a serious drain on the finances of the institutions. Scouring the country for new students while allowing half of the present class to withdraw is very much like padlocking the barn doors after the most valuable cows have departed. It also represents a serious loss in time and effort for the student and for the faculty, and it adds one more record of failure to the student's history.
>
> ...**it is the responsibility of all personnel workers to see that those students who are admitted are started off on the right foot** and given the help that is necessary, so that their chance of graduation will be as great as is humanly possible... Once the student has been admitted,... **the institution must accept the responsibility of doing the best that it can for him**. [Emphasis added] (Arbuckle, 1953)

Forty-six years after Dugald S. Arbuckle, Director of Student Personnel at the School of Education at Boston University, made this proclamation, the attrition rate at many colleges and universities across the country has not improved significantly. If anything, it may have worsened. In analyzing the results of the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) of the 1972 cohort of graduates, Tinto found that 13% of high school graduates had earned a two-year or lesser degree, and 39% had earned a bachelor's degree six years after graduation. In other words, six years after high school graduation, 52% of all college-goers had earned some type of postsecondary degree (Tinto, 1993). The High School and Beyond (HSB) studies of the 1980 cohort of high school graduates yielded the following statistics: By 1986, 17.7% of all students had earned a two-year degree or less and 26.5% had earned a bachelor's degree, for a grand total of 44.2%. (Tinto, 1993) The percentage of degree completion had decreased significantly when comparing the graduating classes of 1972 and 1980. Perhaps low figures like these have prompted researchers (i.e., Astin, 1993, Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, Tinto, 1993) to study the

causes of student departure and the factors that contribute to student persistence. The reasons for the decline in degree attainment are many, and most are beyond the scope of this paper. However, some of the factors that have contributed to this trend include a larger and more diverse number of students attending college, as well as a higher cost of education that requires many students to work part- or full-time, making four years an unrealistic completion time for many students.[1]

I. Institutional Departure

The literature defines institutional departures as voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary departure takes effect when a student decides to leave the institution for personal reasons such as transferring to another institution or completing a vocational/occupational degree. In most of these instances students are meeting the academic standards of the institution; therefore, the student departure should not considered an academic failure, but a success. However, they are considered institutional failures because of the lack of a system-wide tracking mechanism to account for student transfers, especially when students leave one educational system to join another (such as in the case of community college students transferring to other two-year institutions or to four-year colleges). Also, tracking between community colleges and industry is negligible if not non-existent. Researchers mistakenly identify such cases as institutional failures rather than successes. Involuntary departure, on the other hand, means that a student is asked to leave for academic or disciplinary reasons.

Since obtaining a degree represents an investment of time, money, and effort, the decision to leave or persist hinges upon the benefits perceived by the student (Tinto, 1993). This is especially true in the case of voluntary departures. A student decides to leave

[1] Tinto points out that the studies quoted above took place prior to institutional and system-wide implementation of programs targeting the retention and persistence of special populations. It would be

college for a number of reasons, some of which may be individual, institutional, or external. In some of these instances, the factors that contribute toward leaving are outside of the realm of the institution's control. But in those instances where the institution can make a difference, the research in the area of student persistence can be helpful in designing effective programs.

According to Tinto, the decision to withdraw is a function of what happens after the students arrive at the institution, not what happens prior to their arrival. In other words, there is a cause and effect relationship between the students' social and intellectual experiences at the institution and their decision to leave or persist. Decisions to withdraw are a reflection of the "dynamic nature of the social and intellectual life of the communities which are housed in the institution, in particular of the daily interaction which occur among its members" (Tinto, 1993, p. 5). Tinto's model of institutional departure is not only one which identifies intellectual and social interaction as two critical variables that affect student persistence, but also identifies ways in which the institution can create opportunities for intellectual and social interaction for all kinds of students. Furthermore, it suggests ways in which these interactions, both within and outside of the classroom, can spill over to other areas of campus life.

The findings of other researchers such as Astin, as well as Pascarella and Terenzini, seem to support this theory. Astin's theory of student involvement argues that every aspect of student development, including cognitive, affective, psychological and behavioral, is affected by the level of student involvement, especially with peers (Astin, 1993). For student development involvement with faculty is second in importance only to peer involvement. Pascarella and Terenzini conclude that the extent of interactions with faculty and student peers determines the impact of college on individual students. They explain,

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interesting to explore 1) the net effect of these efforts and 2) the counter effect of public policy such as Proposition 209, that calls for elimination of many, if not all, of these special programs.

"The influence of interpersonal interaction with these groups is manifest in intellectual outcomes as well as in changes in attitudes, values, aspirations, and a number of psychological characteristics." They also assert that

> The educational impact of a college's faculty is enhanced when their contacts with students extend beyond the formal classroom to informal nonclassroom settings. Net of student background characteristics, extent of informal contacts with faculty is positively linked with a wide range of outcomes. These include perceptions of intellectual growth during college, increases in intellectual orientation, liberalization of social and political values, growth in autonomy and independence, increases in interpersonal skills, gains in general maturity and personal development, educational aspirations, and attainment, orientation toward scholarly careers, and women's interest in and choice of sex-atypical (male-dominated) careers. (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 620)

Because of the influence that faculty exert on student development, community colleges must find creative ways to promote faculty-student interaction in informal non-classroom settings. Although it is particularly challenging given the constraints of community college students, faculty-student contact must occur in order to stop the revolving door syndrome.

II. Historical Perspective

Given the importance that the research places upon the need for students to interact with faculty both inside and outside of the classroom, a brief historical review of the faculty's role in student persistence is essential.

When higher education first appeared on the scene in the American colonies, the faculty played a critical role in the development of what we would call today "the whole student." Faculty were preoccupied with paying equal attention to the intellectual, social, religious, and moral growth of the student. One of the roles of the college president was that of disciplinarian, as well as spiritual and guidance counselor. As the student population increased between 1850 and 1950 and the job of running a college became more complex, presidents began to delegate some of the guidance responsibilities to faculty. Guidance and discipline issues became even more crucial as colleges began to admit

women. In 1837, Oberlin College became the first college to admit women. And as more and more colleges became coeducational, the role of the personnel worker became indispensable. "Lady principals," and later deans of women, were assigned administrative and disciplinary duties. The movement toward student personnel work began around 1882, with the creation of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, later known as the American Association of University Women (Mueller, 1961). As an increasing number of women began to assert their role in American society in the 1920s and 1930s, guidance work in women's colleges took the role of vocational/occupational counseling. Kate Hevner Mueller describes the impetus for the personnel movement in these terms:

> The wide influence of Dewey's philosophy, the "general education" movement, and the elective system coincided with large enrollments and heterogeneous student populations. Community opinion began to exercise an imperious and almost tyrannical sway. It was felt that once a college had admitted a student, it assumed a kind of moral obligation to do everything within reason to help him succeed, and student failure was actually laid at its door. The student personnel movement was begun as an answer to this obligation and charge. (Mueller, 1961, p. 54)

To a large degree, student affairs personnel at community colleges have become a victim of their own success. Given the intricacies of transfer agreements and the complexities of student persistence, instructional faculty have, for the most part, relegated the responsibility for student success to student affairs personnel.

After the turn of the century, as the knowledge fields began to advance rapidly, faculty found that they had to invest more time keeping up with the changes in their field; they became disengaged from their roles as faculty advisors. Other factors that contributed to the development of student support services as we know them today: the large influx of students after World War II, the increase in student diversity, the advances in the field of psychology in terms of counseling techniques, the development of new measurements and assessment instruments, and the development of theory.

The literature regarding the professionalization of academic counseling at the community college shows that because these institutions had their roots in K-12 (kindergarten to 12th grade), they adopted a similar organizational structure. However, they lagged behind the parent system in establishing training guidelines and credentialing requirements. As a result of their origin in K-12, counseling programs in community colleges were often referred to as "student personnel services." In some of the literature, what we today call community college counselors were referred to as "junior college guidance workers" (McDaniel 1944).

The end of World War II provided an unprecedented demand for higher education, particularly at community colleges, which viewed the development of terminal education as one of their primary missions. Community colleges had to develop vocational/occupational programs for thousands of war veterans and displaced war-industry workers. This demand increased the pressure on student personnel services. But it was not until the 1950s that community colleges began to assess the need for training standards and accreditation requirements. California appears to have taken the lead in pioneering this assessment. In fiscal year 1953-54 a survey of 37 of the 60 existing junior colleges in California was conducted by a consultant in guidance in the California State Department of Education. According to this survey, the consultant found that

> Aside from the use of faculty advisers, **the junior colleges generally do not have formal or systematic plans for securing widespread faculty participation in the student personnel program. Such participation is vitally needed and encouraged** [Emphasis added.], of course, and in the opinions of a large majority of the student personnel officers appears to be increasing. In only a few instances was the outlook reported as discouraging. (McCreary, 1954, p.13)

Almost fifty years after this survey was conducted, little has changed in terms of the division of labor at community colleges between instruction and student affairs. With a few exceptions, student success is viewed almost exclusively as the responsibility of student affairs personnel. Viewed from another perspective, student affairs personnel have

failed to include instructional faculty as active partners in their efforts to promote student success. At BCC, for example, counseling and instructional faculty have yet some work to do to establish a spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility. For instance, since BCC has such an outstanding reputation as a transfer institution, transfer agreements are technical in nature and change frequently. Counselors thus feel that it would be unrealistic to expect instructional faculty to remain current about transfer articulation agreements.

Similarly, faculty generally feel that they are ill-prepared to provide advisement to students in the areas of transfer and graduation requirements. Thus, they choose not to engage in the advisement process. Counseling points out the importance of establishing a clear definition of and parameters for faculty advisement; however, they fail to provide them. Other than the teaching of the student success seminar and a handful of mentoring cases, no formalized faculty involvement exists in student support services. Even more telling is the fact that with some training, instructional faculty would be capable of providing formalized advising in the non-technical college survival skills areas such as time management, note taking, and test taking strategies; yet counseling fails to view faculty as allies in promoting student success.

Labor relations and job security concerns appear to be at the root of this lack of collaboration. Because it is not in their contract, very few faculty would step forward to provide this type of formalized student support service unless they are compensated. For their part, counselors are concerned that fewer of them would be hired if instructors were allowed to provide advisement services. It is altogether possible that a more collaborative environment could exist in the future, given the appropriate incentives, adequate training, and maximization of the use of technology and safeguards to ensure accuracy of information.

In terms of credentialing requirements, the 1953-54 survey cited above broke ground in what later turned into the establishment of credential requirements for the pupil

personnel services, or counseling credential for community colleges. The consultant compiled recommendations from the field as to the number of college units in the undergraduate and graduate level in areas such as psychology, guidance courses, educational statistics, and research, plus teaching experience. One of the consultant's conclusions clearly states the need for credentialing standards for counseling at the community college level.

> Many states require a special credential for secondary school counselors in addition to a teaching certificate. A special counselors' credential for junior college counselors in California may help to insure that the training requirements recommended in this study are met by all persons looking forward to counseling in public junior colleges. (Ibid., pp. 43-44)

III. Recent Trends

A. Student Success Seminars

The increase in college student populations, coupled with increased student diversity in the last 30 years, has pressured student support services to help students persist and succeed in college. The highly publicized research in the area of student persistence has prompted a concern for the development of the "whole student." The serious budgetary shortfalls in student support services have made it difficult to meet student demand. These shortfalls are critical, especially in states like California, where counselors and librarians have only recently approached parity with instructional faculty in meeting the AB 1725 requirement for full-time to part-time faculty ratio.

However, counselors and librarians do not count toward meeting Section 84362 (d) of the Education Code (also known as the 50 Percent Law). This law requires that colleges spend 50 percent of their educational expenses on salaries of classroom instructors, which does not include counselors or librarians, nor administrators. The original purpose of this requirement was "to limit class size and the relative growth of administrative and other non-instructional costs in California public education." (Mize, 1999) However, one of the net

effects of the 50 Percent Law is that it provides a disincentive for community colleges to hire counselors, thus negatively affecting student success.

Inadequate staffing, larger and more diverse student bodies, combined with the factors listed above, make the collaboration between student support services and instruction indispensable in the quest for student success. To this end, a number of colleges and universities across the country have begun to implement retention programs called "Freshman Year Experience Seminars," which focus on mentoring, faculty advising, supplemental teaching, and peer advising for students in their first year of college. In most instances, however, they represent classes that incorporate supplemental teaching into their curricula and are taught either by student personnel staff such as counselors, or are team-taught by instructors and counselors. On some community college campuses these programs are called "student success" courses or seminars. These programs are being promoted throughout the country at conferences and through monographs by John Gardner, and others, from the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition. The center, which also conducts studies on the effectiveness of these programs, is located on the campus of the University of South Carolina at Columbia.

Intervention programs in community colleges that are geared toward increasing student persistence take into consideration the fact that these are commuter institutions. As a consequence, an increasing number of these programs place the intervention within courses such as the "Student Success Seminar," or embed it within existing courses in the form of supplemental instruction. According to counselor Ed Stupka, at Sacramento City College, for example, a student success course has been a part of the curriculum since approximately 1978. It is a three-unit, non-mandatory, transferable course that fulfills a general education requirement. Generally speaking, 14 sections of this course are offered in the fall and 10 in the spring semester and only about eight percent of the students enroll

in the course. The sections are taught by three to four of 17 total counselors. However, Stupka believes that "any faculty member who wants to do a good job is capable of teaching the class, given the training."

Stupka has conducted research related to students who complete the student success course at Sacramento City College. The research shows that students who complete the Student Success course earn more units and tend to have a higher GPA than students who do not complete the course. As a group, completers earn 326% more units than non-completers. Also, students who complete the course persist at a higher rate than those who do not.

Although the research indicates that this course has a positive effect on first-time college students, it has received cursory institutional support. It has not received much opposition, but it has not generated much excitement, either. This is not uncommon, however. According to Stupka, one of the reasons why the course receives only cursory institutional support is that it is taught exclusively in the Counseling Department; therefore, other faculty do not have ownership of it. Given the limited counseling resources, the course offerings fall short of meeting the demand for them. Stupka feels that as a result of this limitation, fewer students take the course in California than in other states.

The design of these Freshman Year Experience programs and student success classes is supported by the research of Tinto, Astin, Pascarella and Terenzini, some of which was discussed earlier. These programs highlight the need for faculty to play an active role in the retention of students, all students, including the academically underprepared and the disadvantaged. This "new" role of faculty, as I have demonstrated, is not really new; it is the role that educators originally played in higher education in the United States up until the Nineteenth Century when the rise in German education brought about an increased emphasis on intellectual growth. Colleges in the United States also adopted this new trend. In a general sense, teachers have not stopped counseling and

counselors continue to teach: Teachers counsel students on how to be successful in their area of expertise and counselors teach students how to succeed in life. Mueller emphasizes the need for blurring the lines when she writes:

> We take it for granted that the classroom teacher has been engaged in such person-to-person contacts, whether called counseling or not, throughout the whole long history of teaching and that he will always continue to be so. It is a part of his job. Official counselors could never duplicate the variety of opportunities which daily confront the teacher, nor would they wish to do so. There is no question of "either-or" (counselor or teacher), but only questions concerning the level, area, and depth of the counseling which is to be done by both. In general, it seems best to avoid the two extremes of having all counseling done by those in the profession of student personnel, or having all counseling handled by the teaching faculty. (Mueller, 1961, pp. 208-209)

Astin's theory of student involvement and Tinto's model of social and academic integration in and out of the classroom are especially critical to the success of community college students. More college students work nowadays than they did in the past. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997), in 1995 47% of full-time college students aged 16-24 worked, and 26.8% worked at least 20 hours per week. Also, 83% of part-time students in the same age bracket held a job, and 73% worked at least 20 hours per week. Community college students face other obstacles as well. Many of them commute or have family responsibilities; consequently, their time on campus is often restricted to the classroom. Therefore, programs that promote retention and persistence such as freshman or first-year programs and student success classes, must involve faculty as much as student services personnel and student peers. Tinto stresses that "personal contact with both faculty and student peers and the attainment of competent membership in the first year of college is essential to all forms of persistence, indeed to learning in general." (Tinto, 1996, p. 102) Contact with faculty is especially critical in the community college for the reasons indicated above, or as Tinto says: "If [students] are not reached in the classroom, it is unlikely that they will be reached at all" (Tinto, 1996, p. 97).

A higher degree of faculty-student contact outside of the classroom is unlikely to materialize unless the student feels a "connection" with the teacher. That connectedness can be developed and encouraged in the classroom, and it subsequently spills over to activities outside of the classroom.

B. Teaching and Learning Approaches

The literature shows that the quality of the faculty-student contact in the classroom depends to a large extent on the strategies and pedagogy employed by the faculty member. A teacher who uses the traditional lecture method, which is considered a deficit model, has a tendency to not only alienate but also generate resistance and passivity on the part of the student.

> In traditional classes, affective and cognitive life are in an unproductive conflict. Students learn that education is something to put up with, to tolerate as best they can, to obey or to resist. Their role is to answer questions, not to question answers. In passive settings, they have despairing and angry feelings about education, about social change, and about themselves. They feel imposed on by schooling. They expect to be lectured at and bored by an irrelevant curriculum. They wait to be told what to do and what things mean. Some follow instructions; others go around them; some manipulate the teacher; still others undermine the class. In such an environment, many students become cynical, identifying intellectual life with dullness and indignity. (Shor, 1992)

Conversely, a teacher who uses a more democratic, participatory method, encourages student involvement by providing positive feedback, enhances self-esteem, and makes the learning experience more appealing.

> To help move students away from passivity and cynicism, a powerful signal has to be sent from the very start, a signal that learning is participatory, involving humor, hope, and curiosity. A strong participatory and affective opening broadcasts optimistic feelings about the students' potential and about the future: students are people whose voices are worth listening to, whose minds can carry the weight of serious intellectual work, whose thought and feeling can entertain transforming self and society. (Shor, 1992)

Collaborative learning is considered an "umbrella term" that describes a family of educational approaches requiring "joint intellectual effort by students or students and

teachers together." (Leigh Smith and MacGregor, 1992, p. 10) Some of these approaches include:

- Problem-Centered Instruction (Case Studies and Simulations)
- Writing Groups
- Peer Teaching (Supplemental Instruction and Writing Fellows)
- Discussion Groups and Seminars
- Learning Communities

Collaborative learning represents a departure from the lecture or teacher-centered approach most commonly used in colleges and universities. The role of the instructor in the lecture-centered approach, is to disseminate knowledge to students. The students' role is to receive, memorize, process and recall the knowledge. In a collaborative environment, however, both teachers and students adopt more complex roles and responsibilities. The classroom becomes an interdependent community. Instead of being "expert transmitters of knowledge" to students, teachers become "expert designers of intellectual experiences" for students (Ibid., p. 10). Students become involved in an intellectual process that enables them to be creators and meaning makers. Leigh Smith and MacGregor succinctly describe the effects of collaborative learning in the following paragraph.

> Learning has affective and subjective dimensions. Collaborative tasks build connections between learners and ideas and between students and teachers. Listening to and acknowledging diverse perspectives, working in cooperative spirit, becoming a peer teacher or a peer learner—all these activities are socially involving, as well as emotionally demanding. Such intense social interaction stimulates learners and learning. In collaborative learning situations, students generally experience a shift in their intellectual development as they learn to articulate their own point of view and listen to the views of others. They begin to see themselves not just as recipients of truths from textbooks or faculty members, or procedural knowers (going through the motions called for by the teacher), but as responsible creators of their own knowledge and meaning—a change that is essential to life-long learning and true intellectual development. (Ibid., 1992, p. 11)

Given the need to engage students in their own intellectual, psychological and personal development, particularly at the community college, and the emphasis of collaborative learning on social and intellectual engagement and mutual responsibility, this pedagogy seems to be ideal for helping students become involved and achieve social and academic integration.

In summary, the responsibility for student success in general, and student persistence in particular, clearly rests not only with student support services staff, but also with instructional faculty. Collaboration between instruction and student affairs is crucial in promoting student success at all levels of higher education, particularly at the community college, given the commuter nature of the institution. Furthermore, the more effective programs that promote student persistence would arguably need to involve faculty and time in the classroom. The time spent in the classroom would appear to promote both student involvement and social and academic integration through the use of collaborative learning techniques, which enable students to connect with ideas, with each other, and with teachers.

Chapter 3

Design and Methods

I. Questions

1. What effect do collaborative learning approaches used in orientation have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?
2. What are some of the factors that prevent community college students from succeeding?
3. What effect do collaborative learning approaches used in English classes have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?

II. Purpose

The purpose of the present study, which was known at Bay Community College as the Student Success Project (SSP), was to determine whether interventions based on several extensively researched theories on student persistence can have a positive effect on probationary and persistence rates at one community college in Southern California. I based the design of the interventions primarily on Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement and Vincent Tinto's model of academic and social integration. In addition, the instructors involved with the project used a collaborative learning model. Astin's

research indicates that students who are involved in campus activities with other students and faculty tend to be more successful and experience a higher persistence rate than those who are not involved. Similarly, Tinto has developed a model of student persistence that includes academic and social integration. He views an academic institution as a collection of social communities. Students who feel integrated to at least one community are most likely to persist. According to Tinto (1993), academic integration takes place when students interact with faculty both formally and informally. Social integration helps students feel connected to the college, but particularly to faculty, staff and students, which in turn enhances student persistence. I view collaborative learning as a vehicle to achieve both student involvement and social and academic integration.

III. Site

The site for the implementation of this study is a large metropolitan, public community college located in a single-campus district in Southern California. As of Fall '98 there were a total of 24,869 students, 32.4% of whom had a full-time status and 16,802 or 67.6% were enrolled part-time. There were 14,068 women or 56.6% and 10,801 men or 43.4%. The student body can be further subdivided into the following categories: first-time in college, transfer to BCC, readmissions, continuing and enrolled in grades 9-12. Table 3.1 shows this breakdown.

I selected BCC as the site for this study for three reasons: First, for its accessibility as a result of my employment at the college; second, for its ethnically diverse student body; and third, for its reputation as having one of the top transfer rates to

Table 3.1 BCC Student Classification, Fall '98

CLASSIFICATION	*N*	*PERCENT*
First-time in College	4,656	18.7%
Transfer to BCC	3,823	15.4%
Readmissions	3,029	12.2%
Continuing	13,229	53.2%
Enrolled in Grades 9-12	132	.5%
Total	24,869	100%

both the University of California and the California State University systems. Table 3.2 shows the ethnic diversity at BCC.

Despite having one of the highest transfer rates to the state systems, Bay Community College also has a high probationary rate, which is the rule for community colleges in California rather than the exception. Historically, BCC had drawn students from within the city boundaries. However, in recent years, BCC has attracted more

students from a much larger, ethnically diverse adjacent city to the east. Consequently, BCC is more diverse than the city where it is located. Table 3.3 shows the city's ethnic breakdown.

This shift in student source is reflected in the growth of Latino students at BCC. From Fall, 1988 to Fall, 1998 the Latino population increased from 11.7% to the current

Table 3.2 Ethnic Composition at BCC, Fall '98

ETHNICITY	N	PERCENT
American Indian	143	0.6%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	5,261	21.2%
Black	2,778	11.2%
Hispanic	5,585	22.5%
Other Non-White	588	2.4%
Non-Respondents	1,424	5.7%
White Non-Hispanic	9,090	36.6%
Total	24,869	100%

22.5%, whereas the White non-Hispanic population has decreased from 57.8% in Fall '90 to the present 36.6%. Before Fall '90 the demographic classification for White included

"All Other." In the mean time, the representation of the other ethnic groups has remained relatively steady, except for the Asian/Pacific Islander population, which has increased by approximately 6.4% from 14.8% to the present 21.2% from Fall '88 to Fall '98.

Unlike most other community colleges, BCC does not follow the traditional calendar with its 18-week fall and spring semesters and a six-week summer session. Instead, it follows a non-traditional calendar with two 16-week semesters (fall and spring), and two six-week sessions (summer and winter). BCC is able to offer 16 rather

Table 3.3 City's Ethnic Composition, 1990

ETHNICITY	N	PERCENT
American Indian	433	.5%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	5,364	6.2%
Black	3,830	4.4%
Hispanic	11,842	13.6%
Other	99	.1%
White	65,337	75.2%
Total	86,905	100%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

than 18-week semesters by compressing class time, in other words, by lengthening class-

session time. The purpose behind the adoption of the non-traditional calendar was threefold: 1) to avoid a lengthy winter break in the fall semester just before final exams, 2) to maximize the use of the facility, and 3) to increase FTEs (Full-time Equivalencies). The state legislature uses FTEs to determine the funding for community colleges.

The non-traditional calendar currently in use at BCC is a critical piece of information, particularly in persistence-related studies. Although data showing the effect of the winter session on persistence from fall to spring is not available, having a six-week session in between the two semesters may affect persistence from one semester to the next, not unlike how the summer session affects persistence from the spring to the fall semester. Studies conducted at BCC both before and after the adoption of the current calendar have shown that students persist at a higher rate from fall to spring than from spring to fall. Although the reasons were not studied, it is quite conceivable that a longer break between semesters increases the possibility for students to change their goals, especially when employment is involved. Since students view the winter session as an opportunity to obtain extended full-time, albeit temporary, employment, the persistence rate from the fall semester to the winter session is less than from fall to spring. The persistence rate for all graded students from Fall '98 to Winter '99 was only 30%, whereas the persistence from Fall '98 to Spring '99 was 63%.

Persistence in community colleges is complex and BCC is no exception. The complexity of persistence stems from the multiple functions of community colleges. High persistence rates are not necessarily good nor are low rates bad. A student whose goal is to transfer or obtain an AA (Associate in Arts) Degree may complete his or her goal in two to three years. However, it might take longer. If a student takes four or five years to complete the above goal, is that bad? Not necessarily, depending on the value that the institution places on persistence vs. goal completion. If a student has a goal that is achievable in one semester, should the institution view the fact that he or she does not persist the second semester as positive or negative? If a student transfers to another community college that is closer to home the second semester, should the original college count the non-persistence as positive or negative? Unfortunately for community colleges, persistence data do not differentiate between the various scenarios. When studying persistence a researcher can, however, subdivide the data demographically or by matriculation status. For example, besides analyzing the data by gender and ethnicity, a researcher can examine persistence by status: full-time vs. part-time, first-time vs. continuing students, and of course, overall. At BCC each subcategory yields a different persistence rate. Table 3.4 illustrates the persistence rate from Fall '95 to Fall '97 by ethnicity and part-time vs. full-time status. Full-time students have higher

Table 3.4 Persistence at BCC

Ethnicity	Fall '95	Spring '96	Fall '96	Spring '97	Fall '97
All					
American Indian	117	70%	47%	38%	26%
Asian	3,941	71%	49%	39%	23%
Black	2,339	60%	43%	34%	25%
Latino	4,127	66%	50%	41%	33%
White	8,110	64%	45%	36%	26%
Full-time					
American Indian	36	81%	56%	36%	25%
Asian	2,282	82%	56%	43%	22%
Black	718	80%	55%	45%	30%
Latino	1,096	81%	59%	50%	39%
White	2,184	80%	54%	44%	28%
Part-time					
American Indian	81	65%	43%	38%	27%
Asian	1,659	56%	40%	32%	23%
Black	1,621	51%	37%	29%	23%
Latino	3,031	61%	46%	37%	31%
White	5,926	58%	42%	35%	28%

persistence rates regardless of ethnicity. A full-time student is one who enrolls in 12 units or more per semester.

Comparing persistence data from different community colleges adds to the complexity of persistence. For example, comparing the persistence rates at BCC, which emphasizes the transfer function, with those of another college, which might stress the vocational/occupational function, would be misleading since transfer goals may take longer to achieve than vocational/occupational goals.

IV. Sample

In the fall of 1998, 500 first-time college students whose goal was to transfer were randomly selected and assigned to the Student Success Project (SSP) orientation. These 500 students received the same invitation and orientation assignment card that non-participants received to avoid bias in the sample. Of the 500 pre-selected students, 195 attended the SSP orientation and 157 became "official" students by enrolling for Fall, 1998. This reduction in the sample was due to two factors: not every student who submits an admissions application for community college actually attends, and the Human Subject Protection Committee requires that participation in a research study be strictly voluntary. When given the option to participate in the longer SSP or the shorter regular orientation, some students opted to attend the latter.

V. Interventions

In an effort to limit the scope of this study, I divided the interventions into primary and secondary; therefore, the data analysis focuses on the primary interventions. They were

- New student orientation
- English classes
- A Human Development 20 class
- Academic counseling, and
- Out-of-class activities

The project included two secondary interventions: career advising and mentoring. I did not collect any data nor did I include these interventions in the data analysis because they were embedded within the context of other primary interventions. Specifically, the counselor conducted career advising within the context of academic counseling. Finally, I considered mentoring as one of the out-of-class activities for data analysis purposes.

A. Orientation

Orientation appears to fulfill two roles: providing information to new students about the college, the processes, and policies and procedures; and providing the venue for an anticipatory socialization process (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991) that gives the new

student the opportunity to experience beforehand the behavior that the institution expects of every student. Pascarella and Terenzini cite the work of Merton, 1957 and Merton & Lazersfeld, 1972, who defined anticipatory socialization as the "process or set of experiences through which individuals come to anticipate correctly the norms, values, and behavioral expectations they will encounter in a new social setting" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 403). A more traditional definition of anticipatory socialization refers to those activities that take place outside of the institution such as those sponsored by clubs, relatives, and high school friends. Pascarella and Terenzini provide a much wider definition of anticipatory socialization. Although orientation is an institutional attempt at early socialization, they consider it functionally analogous to anticipatory socialization (Ibid., p. 423).

During the initial planning stages of the Student Success Project, and particularly the SSP orientation process, I asked the collaborators, instructional faculty, counseling faculty, staff, and students, to identify the objectives of orientation. The objectives of orientation, as stated by the counseling faculty at BCC, those who had traditionally been responsible for organizing, planning and facilitating orientation were to:

- welcome students and introduce them to the college culture
- introduce them to campus resources

- explain policies and procedures
- plan their first semester classes
- interpret assessment results
- show a video featuring faculty discussing expectations and tips on how to become a successful student
- explain general education requirements
- provide time management tips
- make available student presentations
- discuss deadlines
- discuss students' responsibilities
- direct students to the fair where they may informally meet faculty from various disciplines and current student representatives from clubs and organizations
- distribute enrollment cards

The time frame for meeting these objectives through the regular orientation process was one-and-a-half hours.

The reason for establishing these institutional goals was related to the intent of this project. The intent was to implement interventions by using collaborative techniques to help students achieve social and academic integration that may enable them to succeed

and thus avoid academic probation and disqualification. I made it clear to the Counseling Department at BCC that my intent was not to disrupt the educational process. Subsequently, throughout the planning process, I referred to the objectives that they had identified to ensure that the activities contributed toward the attainment of the objectives.

The SSP orientation differed in both content and structure from the regular BCC orientation. The counselors who conducted the regular BCC orientation used a traditional lecture method. Counselors and instructors who conducted the SSP orientation used collaborative learning approaches along with the lecture method. Because a participatory approach requires more time than the lecture method, the duration of the SSP orientation was three-and-a-half hours, or two hours longer than the regular orientation. In addition, because of time constraints, SSP only covered a portion of the information covered in the regular orientation. As a result of this reduction in content, the SSP staff planned a follow-up orientation that took place during the third week of the fall semester.

The SSP orientation provided participants the opportunity to:

- feel welcome.
- become acquainted with BCC policies and procedures.

- begin the process of academic and social self-evaluation. (The purpose of this self-evaluation was to make students aware of their own academic and social potential, their strengths and areas of improvement, as well as the tools to help them overcome obstacles.)
- be in touch with their own hopes and concerns as they began their journey in higher education.
- find common ground and feel connected with other first-time college students.
- become acquainted with caring, accessible, knowledgeable individuals at the college who could provide them with advice, guidance, and support.
- acquire the necessary skills to develop and revise their own Student Educational Plan (SEP) by taking into consideration their academic and career goals.

These goals fell in both the cognitive and the affective domains.

For logistical reasons, SSP orientation sessions took place in conjunction with, but separate from, the regular BCC orientation during the "Weekend of Welcome," Friday, July 31 and Saturday, August 1, 1998. There were three simultaneous sessions from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. for a total of 12 sessions. The orientation facilitators included counselors, who played a lead role, instructional faculty from a variety of fields, current BCC students, and alumni.

The counselors began by explaining the purpose of the project to prospective participants before starting the SSP orientation and directed those who wished not to participate to one of the regular orientation sessions. In most instances, BCC students escorted the non-participants to a regular orientation session.

After directing non-participants to a regular orientation session, facilitators distributed orientation materials, which included the following:

- a copy of the *Student Planning Guide for Success*, which all first-time college students receive at BCC
- a copy of the *Collegiate Agenda*, produced exclusively for SSP students
- copies of the IGETC (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum) sheet, and the Associate in Arts degree requirements

Throughout the SSP orientation, the facilitators followed the agenda (Appendix A). Following the explanation of the purpose of the Student Success Project, students signed a consent form required by HSPC, and, in preparation for the icebreaker, the facilitators distributed some scratch paper. They asked the students to write down their best hope and worst fear as they began their college experiences. After a few minutes, the counselors began the icebreaker activity by introducing the staff and asking students to introduce themselves to the group and read their best hope and worst fear. As the

students proceeded with the activity, the counselors used an empathetic approach and provided students with encouragement whenever possible. The point of this icebreaker was to enable students to realize that they had some common ground as they undertook a new, challenging, and stress-producing stage of their lives. Similarly, students would realize that everyone was prepared to begin this journey full of hope and anticipation.

After a brief presentation on the topic of time management through the use of the *Collegiate Agenda*, followed by an introduction to general education, major requirements and financial aid, the facilitators divided the group into smaller groups, and then distributed, assigned and explained the case studies. Facilitators then instructed students to read the case study assigned to them and begin a discussion within the subgroups to determine by consensus the pitfalls and the advice, if any, they would give to the fictional student in the case study. After the groups completed their discussions, the facilitators asked that each group assign a member to briefly summarize the case study and present the recommendations to the group at-large.

Following the individual reports on the case studies, the groups took a ten-minute break. Facilitators provided refreshments to students at break time.

After the break, the facilitators discussed the enrollment process and how to navigate successfully the first two to three weeks in college. Example of topics covered

included: how to read the schedule of classes, drop deadlines, how to add and drop classes, class withdrawal and academic probation policies, and the book purchasing process. To present the student perspective, BCC alumni spoke briefly, introduced themselves, shared their experience at BCC and provided tips on how to be successful. Before working with students on an individual basis to help them select their fall semester classes, facilitators promoted the Human Development 20 class and encouraged students who had taken the English assessment test to consider enrolling in SSP English classes. Facilitators also mentioned future SSP activities and invited students to participate. Furthermore, facilitators showed a nine-minute video featuring instructional faculty discussing faculty expectations and student reactions. In preparation for the process of developing student schedules for the fall semester, facilitators also discussed English or ESL and mathematics assessment scores and course prerequisites. On their way out of the orientation rooms, students received SSP T-shirts embossed with the words "Bay Community College and Student Success Project."

B. English Classes

BCC has in place a mandatory assessment process for students wishing to enroll in English, ESL (English as a Second Language), or mathematics courses. There are three levels of English: Levels A, B, and C. Level C is a prerequisite to Level B and

Level B is a prerequisite to Level A. Level A is the collegiate level and levels B and C are pre-collegiate. English 1 is a one-semester course, while English classes at the basic skills levels B and C are one-year courses.

Table 3.5 shows, for example, that a student who qualifies for Level A may enroll

Table 3.5 English Levels at BCC

LEVEL	CORRESPONDING CLASS
A	English 1 – Freshman Composition (Collegiate Level)
B	English 21A & B –English Fundamentals 1 & 2 (Considered Basic Skills Classes)
C	English 81A & B – Basic Writing Lab. (Considered Basic Skills Classes)

in English 1 or freshman composition. The English Department at BCC agreed to offer one section of each of English 1 and a section of the first semester sequence at each of the basic skills levels for SSP students. However, the SSP section available at the C level did not attract the number of SSP students anticipated; consequently, I eliminated this class from the study and it became available to the general population.

The course description for English 1 and English 21 respectively read as follows:

> **English 1**
>
> This introductory course in rhetoric emphasizes clear, effective written communication and preparation of the research paper.
>
> **English 21A**
>
> This course is the first semester of a two-semester course, English 21AB. It consists of a review of and drill in the fundamentals of English grammar, punctuation, spelling, reading, and composition.

Two factors apparently contributed to the lack of interest in Level C SSP classes. First, a large number of SSP participants who would have placed at Level C had not taken the English assessment instrument by orientation time, thus preventing them from enrolling in an English class. Second, students who place at level C may be more likely to postpone enrolling in an English class.

English instructors who taught SSP classes received cooperative learning materials, including the following books:

- *Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom* by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Karl A. Smith (1991)
- *Advanced Cooperative Learning* by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson and Edythe Johnson Holubec (1992)
- *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* by Ira Shor (1992)

- ***The Nuts and Bolts of Cooperative Learning*** by David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Edythe Johnson Holubec (1994)

The English faculty also agreed to employ participatory types of learning activities and de-emphasize the lecture method. The techniques employed by the English faculty in SSP included: peer editing, peer reading, interviews, whole class, small group and dyad discussions and assignments. The purpose behind this approach is to develop a "cohort" environment through familiar, nurturing, accepting, and supportive surroundings where the students experience trust and interdependence. SSP English teachers also agreed to attend various meetings before, during and after the semester. They maintained reflective journals that included comments about their observations of student reaction to collaborative learning activities and assignments, and their own evaluation of the effectiveness of the various classroom activities and assignments. Also, the instructors agreed to facilitate the distribution and collection of surveys and other research instruments. In exchange, in addition to their regular salary, SSP English teachers received a $1,200 stipend, which is normally paid to instructional faculty at BCC for teaching a class in a special program for the first time.

C. Human Development 20

The Counseling Department at BCC recently developed the curriculum for and received approval from the Curriculum Committee to offer a three-unit human development class based on the freshman or first-year student seminar. The course description for Human Development 20 reads as follows:

> Students will learn how they, as individuals, relate to their educational process, their college, the community, and society as a whole. This course will provide an examination of the history and significance of higher education and explore areas essential to academic success such as: critical thinking, learning styles, decision making, effective communication and the student as an active learner.

As mentioned earlier, many colleges and universities throughout the country have both adopted and adapted a similar seminar to help first-year college students, and special populations within this category, make the transition to college. Freshman year seminar instructors use collaborative learning and other participatory types of activities in an effort to engage students and make them participants in their own personal development and learning. A common approach to teaching the freshman year seminar is to have instructors team teach, especially if they are teaching the course for the first time.

The Human Development 20 course represents another intervention implemented through the Student Success Project. The field of expertise of the instructor selected to teach this class was mathematics. However, he had undergone training for the freshman

year seminar and had previously team taught the course with a counselor. This was his first attempt at teaching the course by himself.

D. Academic Counseling

The primary goals of the academic counseling component were to help students

- remain focused on their academic goals
- identify the steps required to reach their goals, and
- develop a sense of connectedness with the staff, other students, and the institution

Developing a Student Educational Plan (SEP) was of utmost importance in maintaining students' focus on their academic goals and the steps that would lead them to these goals. Therefore, the necessary strategies for developing a realistic SEP were discussed with students at orientation and during follow-up counseling sessions. One of the primary student concerns expressed at orientation during the icebreaker was to ensure that the classes they selected were appropriate for their academic goals. In order to address these concerns, counseling aides regularly called students who had not met with the counselor to schedule an appointment. Some students took the initiative to meet with the counselor and, in fact, some met with her more than once during the fall semester and the winter session. Whenever a student expressed an interest in a major for which BCC

had an expert counselor on staff, the SSP counselor referred the student to the counselor with the expertise in the field.

Since one of the goals of the counseling component was to help students connect with existing programs and student support services, but not necessarily to duplicate efforts, the counselor routinely made referrals. Some of these referrals included programs and support services such as financial aid, EOPS (Educational Opportunities Programs and Services), health services, clubs and organizations, as well as service and ethnic-based clubs and organizations. While referring students, the counselor made sure to consider their needs and interests.

E. Activities

The purpose behind all activities was to promote student involvement, academic and social integration, and whenever possible, to connect out-of-class activities to in-class assignments. These activities included a follow-up orientation, career workshops, a field trip to a museum, an evening at the theater, get-togethers, a mentor/student luncheon, and motivational speakers. In Spring, 1999, the staff organized a weekly Bagel Day and a monthly forum, where selected faculty made motivational presentations to SSP students. Since the purpose of the SSP activities was not to duplicate what was already available to students through other support services and organizations, SSP students

routinely received information through the mail about campus-wide activities. In addition, in their contact with SSP students, the staff encouraged them to become involved in campus-wide activities such as field trips to four-year colleges and universities, clubs, and other organizations and activities.

F. Career Advising

Goal clarification is part of the complex process of personal growth (Tinto, 1993). Moving through varying degrees of certainty about career goals--from very certain to uncertain and back to certain--is common among college students. Colleges have traditionally seen this constant shift as a deficiency on the part of the student. A more proactive approach calls for colleges to provide the means by which students can identify their interests and career goals. First-time college students, therefore, need career advising early on. Participants in the Student Success Project received career advising in the form of workshops and follow-up counseling sessions to help them identify their personal strengths, ascertain their academic and career goals, and design a path to reach them. For the most part, however, career advising was embedded within the academic counseling component and was provided on an "as needed" basis.

G. Mentoring

I invited both instructional and counseling faculty to participate in a mentor capacity with students in the study group to ensure that participants were acquainted with and felt connected to at least one individual at the college who could provide support, encouragement and guidance. Each mentor followed-up with his or her assigned student(s) from time to time to ascertain whether the students were succeeding in their classes and determine whether they needed additional support in other areas such as tutoring, financial aid, on-campus jobs, basic skills instruction, etc.

An informal mentor/student luncheon was held to provide mentors and students an opportunity to meet each other, exchange phone numbers, and plan future meetings. At this meeting, mentors received mentoring information and a copy of the *Student Planning Guide for Success* for referral purposes. Later they received lists of on-campus counselors and their fields of expertise, again for referral purposes.

At the beginning of the spring semester, mentors received a reminder to contact their students and schedule any future meetings if necessary.

In order to determine the progress that SSP students were making in their classes, the counselors and faculty, in their roles as mentors, were encouraged to ask probing questions about the students' study skills, attendance, and time management during

follow-up sessions. Whenever the faculty and/or counselors detected an area that needed attention, they were asked to provide advice and support as well as referrals to appropriate student support services.

VI. Collaborators

Tables 3.6 to 3.10 list the collaborators, by function, who participated in the design and implementation of this study.

Table 3.6 Collaborators, Spring '98

Number	Position
1	Principal Investigator
1	Consultant
4	English Faculty
20	General Faculty
5	Counselors
2	Current Student Volunteers

Table 3.7 Collaborators, Summer '98

Number	Position
1	Principal Investigator
4	English Faculty
20	General Faculty
5	Counselors
2	Current Student Volunteers

Table 3.8 Collaborators, Orientation

Number	Position
1	Principal Investigator
3	English Faculty
2	General Faculty
3	Counselors
5	Current Student Volunteers
2	Alumni

Table 3.9 Collaborators, Fall '98

Number	Position
1	Principal Investigator
20	General Faculty
2	English Faculty
1/2	Counselor
4	Counseling Aides

Table 3.10 Collaborators, Spring '99

Number	Position
1	Principal Investigator
20	Faculty
1/2	Counselor
4	Counseling Aides

Responsibilities

1. Fall '97

I met with the institutional researcher to request the data collection on probationary and disqualified students for Fall '96, Spring '97, and Fall '97. After analyzing the data, I met with the Chair of the Department Chairs Committee to discuss the data on probationary and disqualified students and request to make a presentation at a subsequent meeting. The Chair of Department Chairs granted me an invitation to formally present the data.

2. Spring '98

To ensure institution-wide support for the Project, I continued to make formal presentations on the probationary data to primary stakeholders. They included the Academic Senate and the Counseling Department. I then began to share my ideas about a pilot study to implement interventions to reduce the probationary rate among first-time students. Obtaining the support of the vice presidents in charge of academic affairs and student affairs was of utmost importance if any degree of collaboration was to take place between the two segments of the college. At a meeting with the two vice presidents they expressed their support for the project. Their support was more than symbolic, since they

would be asked to approve the classes, the hiring of the counselor, the counseling aides, and the payment of stipends to the English faculty.

Subsequently, I met with the President of BCC, who expressed her concern about probationary students and their lack of persistence and also agreed to support the project.

Following these meetings, a reporter from the college newspaper requested an interview regarding the probationary data and an article appeared in the newspaper on April 22, 1998. I met individually and in small groups with several key players to promote "buy-in" from various segments of the college, and to ensure collaboration in logistical matters. These key players included the chair of counseling, dean of counseling, dean of enrollment management and representatives from Information Management. The support and collaboration from these individuals was necessary to ensure that SSP participants were appropriately selected and received orientation materials with the necessary information so as to avoid disrupting the educational process.

A number of concerns were expressed at these meetings. The three primary concerns were as follows:

- the extended length of the SSP orientation vis-à-vis the regular orientation, (3 1/2 hours vs. 1 1/2 hours)

- the quality and quantity of information provided at the SSP orientation, and
- the course of action that the college would take as a result of the outcomes of the study.

The main concern with the length of the SSP orientation was one of efficiency: What were we going to do with students who opted not to participate in the SSP orientation because of the longer span than the regular orientation? How would we accommodate them if we had a mass exodus? I assured them that the SSP staff would escort the non-SSP participants to a regular orientation session. As to the mass exodus concern, I asked them to trust me. The second concern had to do with the emphasis that the Counseling Department had historically placed on information. These concerns were alleviated when I informed them that we would offer a follow-up orientation to disseminate information that was not covered in the original orientation. The third concern can best be summed up in two hypothetical questions: Supposing that the data showed that students who participated in the SSP orientation had a higher GPA, a lower rate of probation, and a higher rate or persistence, would BCC support adopting the SSP model and offer a longer orientation to **ALL** four to six thousand first-time BCC students every fall and one to two thousand in the spring? Would we have the staff, the facility, and the funding? These were questions that only senior administration could answer.

I met also with the Department Chair of English to solicit her support and obtain the sections needed for the project.

In addition, the collaborators met several times to plan the orientation content and the intervention strategies for Fall '98 and Spring '99. Throughout the planning and implementation of this project, I placed an emphasis on the collaboration between instruction and student services. Of paramount importance was the understanding that academic and student affairs shared the responsibility for student success and persistence.

3. Summer '98

The collaborators continued to plan the orientation and follow-up activities. Counselors, faculty, and student volunteers participated in a dress rehearsal prior to orientation. This same group, plus two alumni, conducted the SSP orientation for students in the study group. I prepared orientation materials, coordinated the orientation, developed evaluation instruments and databases, monitored activities, and began the process of collecting and analyzing the data.

I met with the English faculty to determine their style of teaching, made them aware of the purpose of the project, shared materials on collaborative learning, and informed them of the expectations. I distributed the books mentioned earlier on cooperative and collaborative learning to each English instructor.

4. Fall '98 and Spring '99

a. I

I coordinated follow-up activities and collected, stored, and analyzed data in preparation for the report on findings and recommendations.

b. English Faculty

Two English faculty members adopted a student-participatory pedagogy in their lesson plans and syllabi, maintained journals, planned out-of-class activities, met with the SSP counselor on an as-needed basis, and participated in a debriefing meeting at the end of the semester with the principal investigator and the SSP counselor.

c. General Faculty

General instructional and counseling faculty participated in mentoring activities.

d. Counselors

A tenured counselor conducted career workshops for SSP students. In addition, an adjunct counselor was hired to provide individual academic counseling sessions. Her assignment consisted of eighteen hours per week. The staff made half-hour counseling appointments, which increased to one hour at the request of the counselor. Topics of discussion covered in individual counseling sessions included developing and updating Student Educational Plans, choosing a major, researching possible transfer institutions

and requirements, and providing referrals to special programs and student life activities.

e. Counseling Aides

Counseling Aides participated in training workshops to familiarize themselves with student support services and receive instruction on such topics as privacy and confidentiality. They assisted faculty and counselors with the planning and implementation of follow-up activities by developing a monthly calendar of events, contacting students by telephone, sending out mailers, and providing non-technical information to participants. Counseling aides also compiled a file for each SSP student with pertinent information, which the counselor used and updated at each counseling session.

VII. Subgroups

In the data analysis I subdivided the study group into ten distinct subgroups to determine the effectiveness of the different primary interventions. Since enrollment in classes and participation in activities was strictly voluntary, student participation, or the lack thereof, determined the subgroup classification. **Students in all groups participated in the SSP orientation.**

A. Group 1

Those students who participated only in orientation and received no other intervention made up Group 1.

B. Group 2

Group 2 consisted of students in the study group who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class.

C. Group 3

SSP participants who enrolled in the SSP English 21A class made up Group 3. Depending on the students' performance in 21A, at the end of the semester the teacher may recommend advancement to English 1 or completion of the second semester of the one-year sequence (English 21B).

D. Group 4

Group 4 consisted of students in the study group who enrolled in the SSP Human Development 20 class.

E. Group 5

Group 5 consisted of students in the study group who enrolled in either English 1 or English 21A, and Human Development 20.

F. Group 6

SSP students who met with the SSP counselor made up Group 6.

G. Group 7

Group 7 was composed of those SSP students who did not meet with the SSP counselor.

H. Group 8

SSP students who attended two or more activities made up Group 8.

I. Group 9

I classified SSP students who did not attend any SSP activities as Group 9.

J. Group 10

Finally, SSP students who maximized their participation in the Student Success Project composed Group 10. Specifically, Group 10 consisted of SSP students who enrolled in Human Development 20 and either English 1 or English 21A, met with the SSP counselor, and attended two or more SSP activities.

VIII. Control Group

The control group consisted of 1,770 first-time college students whose goal was to transfer. These students were randomly selected from all the students who submitted an admissions application for Fall, 1998. Following matriculation guidelines, BCC

Table 3.11 Study Sample Subgroups

GROUP NUMBER	INTERVENTION
1	Orientation only
2	Orientation and English 1
3	Orientation and English 21A
4	Orientation and Human Development 20
5	Orientation, English 1 or English 21A, and Human Development 20
6	Orientation, met with SSP counselor
7	Orientation, did not meet with SSP counselor
8	Orientation, attended 2+ SSP activities
9	Orientation, did not attend any SSP activities
10	Orientation, SSP Eng. 1/Eng. 21A, HD 20, counseling, 2+ activities

requires all first-time college students to attend an orientation. The staff enforces orientation attendance by issuing enrollment cards only after a student presents a one-semester program plan signed by a counselor. Even though BCC requires all first-time college students to attend orientation and it is in the student's best interest to participate, some students enroll without the benefit of an orientation. Usually, however, those who enroll without attending orientation do so after orientation sessions end, one week before the beginning of the fall semester. Although it is impossible to determine with certainty

which students in the control group attended the regular orientation process for Fall 1998, the dean of enrollment management at BCC indicated that more than 95% of first-time college students attend orientation.

The control group received none of the interventions that were provided for the study group. Students in the control group, however, may have been part of existing special programs such as EOPS, Scholars, Adelante, Black Collegians, etc. Consequently, they may have participated on their own in student services activities such as human development classes, study skills, career, early alert and transfer workshops, etc.

IX. Evaluation Measures

Both the study and the control group were randomly selected from the cohort of Fall '98 admissions applicants to BCC. To determine the similarity of the two groups, I conducted a comparison by ethnicity, gender, and other variables taken from the data provided by students in the BCC admissions application, and calculated a z-test. Please refer to Table 4.1 for demographic comparisons of the study and control groups.

I chose the following outcome measures to determine the effectiveness of the interventions:

A. Orientation Evaluations

I designed an orientation evaluation form to determine the level of student satisfaction with the SSP orientation and to compare these data to the level of satisfaction with the regular orientation among students in the control group. The orientation evaluation forms generated both quantitative and qualitative data. I drew the quantitative data from 10 statements that students rated on a scale from one to five (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree), and the grade (A-Fail) that the students gave the overall orientation. Six open-ended questions yielded qualitative data about the students' reaction to the orientation. Four out of the six questions focused on the orientation activities in terms of their usefulness, uselessness, enjoyment, and unpleasantness. One question asked students whether any of their questions were left unanswered and the final open-ended question asked students to make additional comments.

For comparison purposes, I left unchanged as many items as possible in the orientation evaluation form for the control group. The items that yielded quantitative data—statements one to ten, which students had to rate using the same scale as the study sample, and the item that yielded a grade (A-Fail) for the overall orientation—remained the same, except for a small substitution in statement number 10.

The orientation evaluations administered to the study and control groups were similar, except in the following areas:

- Because the control group was not aware of the study being conducted, the instructions on their evaluation forms were slightly modified.
- As mentioned earlier, question number 10 was slightly modified. Since the study group received both a BCC *Student Planning Guide* (the publication that is provided to all BCC students who participate in orientation) and an agenda, and the control group received only the former, I used "agenda" for the study group and "*Student Planning Guide*" for the control group.
- Because the regular orientation places emphasis on information, two new questions were added to the regular orientation evaluation to reflect this feature. These two questions were numbered 16 and 17. Consequently, question number 16 on the SSP orientation evaluation became question number 18 on the regular orientation evaluation.
- Finally, questions 11 through 17 on the regular orientation evaluation included "Yes" and "No" as possible answers to facilitate the tabulation.

Orientation facilitators distributed orientation evaluation forms (Appendix B) at the conclusion of each session, and collected them as the students exited the orientation.

Early in the fall semester the SSP staff mailed orientation evaluation forms (Appendix C) to the students in the control group accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix D) from the vice president of student affairs.

Before conducting the data entry, for both the study and the control groups, the staff coded each of the evaluations for identification and follow-up purposes. Subsequently, the staff kept a record of the students in the control group who returned the completed forms and made telephone calls to those who did not. The staff sent duplicate evaluation forms to those students who needed them, again, with a cover letter from the vice president of student affairs.

B. GPA (grade point average)

I compared the mean grade point average (GPA) for the study group to that of the control group. As an attempt to determine the effectiveness of each of the interventions, I also calculated the mean GPA for each of the subgroups within the study group.

C. Success Rate

Not unlike the analysis of the GPA, I calculated and compared the success rate in English 1 and English 21A for SSP students with the success rate for the control group. I defined success as completing English 1 and English 21A with a grade of "C" or better or "Credit."

D. Probationary Rates

Since one of the objectives of the present study was to determine whether the proposed interventions could help decrease the probationary rates for first-time college students, I analyzed the probationary rates—both academic and lack-of-progress—separately . I compared the academic probation rate for the study group with that of the control group. Also, I calculated and compared the lack-of-progress probation rate for the study group vs. the control group.

E. Persistence Rate

I compared the persistence rate from Fall, 1998 to Spring, 1999 for the study group vs. the control group.

F. Dean's Honor List

I compared the percentage of students in the study group who earned a 3.0 GPA or higher while carrying 12 or more units, vs. the control group.

G. CCSEQ (Community College Student Experiences Questionnaire)

The CCSEQ was developed by Dr. C. Robert Pace in 1994, is currently under the direction of Dr. Patricia Murrell, and is housed in the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee. According to Dr. Pace,

> The idea behind the questionnaire is the concept of "quality and effort." All learning requires time and effort by the learner. What students learn in

> college will depend to a considerable degree on the quality of effort they invest in the college experience. (Lehman, 1995, p. 1)

According to the publisher, the content of the CCSEQ focuses on four elements:

1. Who are the students and why are they at the college?
2. What do they do at the college, or more specifically, how extensively and productively do they use the facilities and opportunities the college provides?
3. What are some of their impressions about the college? and
4. What progress do they think they have made toward important goals? (Ibid., p. 1)

Given the four elements on which the CCSEQ purports to focus, I felt that the data obtained through its use could potentially help assess the effectiveness of the project. I could conceivably accomplish this assessment by analyzing the students' impressions about the college, their effort to benefit from services available, and their progress toward some important goals.

Toward the end of the fall semester and throughout the winter session, the staff mailed out copies of the CCSEQ accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix E) to students in both the study sample and the control group. SSP students who were enrolled in SSP English 1 or English 21A received a copy of the CCSEQ in their classes and their teachers instructed them to return them either to them or to my office. Following the guidelines of the Human Subjects Protection Committee, the staff informed the students that participation in the CCSEQ was strictly voluntary. Finally, the University of

teachers' journals, orientation evaluations, student essays contained in portfolios submitted in English classes, and student class evaluations.

I. English Teachers' Journals

I asked English teachers to maintain reflective journals for their classes. In their journals, I asked them to describe student reaction to in-class and out-of-class activities, and to include their own impressions on the effectiveness of the lesson plans and activities.

J. Student Essays

At the end of the fall semester, the English teachers supplied me with copies of student essays. They represent another source of qualitative data that provided me with an unobtrusive method to corroborate, or not, the findings acquired through in-depth interviews.

Triangulation was possible with the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data that were included in the triangulation included quantitative data from orientation evaluations, GPAs, success and probationary rates, and CCSEQ results. The sources of qualitative data for triangulation purposes were my observation notes from the orientation, the focus groups that took place both during the planning and at the

conclusion of various stages of the implementation process, in-depth student interviews. English teachers' journals, as well as student essays and journals.

Chapter 4

Findings

I. Quantitative Data Analysis

A. Study vs. Control Group Comparisons

In analyzing the quantitative data outside of the orientation evaluation, one factor became apparent – the difference in sample size between the control and the study group. In some instances I could not calculate the statistical significance due to the smallness of the sample, particularly in the case of the study sample subgroups. I include the statistical significance with the data analysis whenever possible. In order to determine whether the study and control groups were comparable, I conducted a two-tailed test on gender and ethnicity and found no significant difference between the groups at the 95% confidence level (Table 4.2). In addition, I found no significant difference between the study and control group for English as the first language. Similarly, I did not find any significant difference between the two groups in day-care necessity. However, the study group had a higher percentage of transfer with an AA Degree and a lower percentage of transfer without an AA Degree than the control group. Furthermore, the study group had

99

a slightly higher percentage of Black and Latino students and a lower percentage of White students

Table 4.1 Study vs. Control Sample Gender Group Cross-tabulation

		GROUP		TOTAL
		Control	Study	
Gender	Male Count	813	82	895
	% within Group	45.9%	43.6%	45.7%
Gender	Female Count	957	106	1063
	% within Group	54.1%	56.4%	54.3%
TOTAL	Count	1770	188	1958
	% within Group	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.2 Study vs. Control Sample Ethnic and Gender Comparisons

Gender	Ethnicity	Control		Study		Z
		n	%	n	%	
F	Am Ind	10	1%	0	0%	1.033
F	Asian	161	9%	18	10%	-0.216
F	Black	141	8%	16	9%	-0.261
F	Hispanic	323	18%	42	22%	-1.370
F	Unknown	61	3%	9	5%	-0.942
F	White	261	15%	21	11%	1.328
M	Am Ind	3	0%	0	0%	0.565
M	Asian	143	8%	17	9%	-0.459
M	Black	114	6%	15	8%	-0.808
M	Hispanic	268	15%	26	14%	0.479
M	Unknown	46	3%	5	3%	-0.050
M	White	239	14%	19	10%	1.309
Total		1,770	100%	188	100%	

1. **Orientation Evaluation**

I present the quantitative data followed by the qualitative data analysis.

2. **Question 1 – What effect do collaborative learning approaches used in orientation have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?**

Table 4.3 contains the quantitative data from the orientation evaluation for both the control and study groups. The instructions on the evaluation form directed the students to use a scale from 1 – 5 to rate each of the statements: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Somewhat Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Somewhat Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree. Each statement had a positive tone, except for statement number 3. The table shows that for every single statement the mean for the study group is higher than the mean for the control group. Consequently, the students who attended the SSP orientation seemed to have a higher level of satisfaction with the orientation. The exception to this assertion is, again, statement number 3, which states: "The information presented was too much for me to remember." Apparently, even though the SSP staff purposely presented less technical information than in the regular orientation, and the time allotted for the SSP orientation was two hours longer, the mean for SSP students was closer to neutral on this

statement than for the control group. The mean rating for the control group was closer to "somewhat disagree."

Table 4.3 Orientation Evaluation Data

QUESTION	*Study Group*			*Control Group*		
	N	Mean	St. Dev.	N	Mean	St. Dev.
4. The information I received at orientation will help me succeed at Bay Community College.	163	4.53	0.77	588	3.88	0.94
5. The information was presented in a clear manner.	162	4.59	0.72	590	4.14	0.85
6. The information presented was too much for me to remember.	165	2.65	1.33	589	2.53	1.26
7. I left the orientation feeling that I had gained the knowledge I had hoped for.	165	4.26	0.83	589	3.53	1.14
8. The counselor(s) and teachers answered my questions thoroughly and professionally.	165	4.47	0.83	589	3.89	1.08
9. Teachers, counselors and other staff were approachable / friendly.	165	4.73	0.65	589	4.19	0.98
10. The staff took a personal interest in my academic future.	165	4.27	0.92	589	3.34	1.18
11. I enjoyed the student involvement in orientation activities.	165	4.02	0.99	587	3.32	1.13
12. My opinions were taken into consideration and my voice was heard.	166	4.22	0.92	586	3.42	1.06
13. I plan to use the *SPG for Success!* Agenda that I received at orientation.	165	4.52	0.85	583	4.03	1.04
16./18. What grade would you give the orientation overall? A, B, C, D, Fail	126	3.67	0.5	560	3.03	0.82

In question number 16 for the study group (18 for the control group), I asked the students what grade they would give the orientation overall. Again, the mean for the study group was higher, 3.67, vs. 3.03 for the control group, or a difference of .64 on a scale from zero to four. This is further indication that SSP students were on average more satisfied with the orientation than students in the control group.

I conducted a paired sample correlation between the means for the study and the control group and found a statistical significance between the two at the 99% confidence level. I also conducted a paired sample two-tailed test and found .000 significance at the 99% confidence level.

The qualitative data generated from questions 11-14 on the orientation evaluation form were somewhat difficult to analyze because the approaches used in SSP and the regular orientation were so markedly different. The purpose of these questions was to determine the usefulness and enjoyment levels of the orientation activities. The questions read as follows:

11. Were there any activities that you found particularly <u>useful</u>? If yes, which activities?

12. Were there any activities that you found particularly <u>useless</u>? If yes, which activities?

13. Were there any activities that you found particularly enjoyable? If yes, which activities?

14. Were there any activities that you found particularly unpleasant? If yes, which activities?

Eighteen SSP students or 17% of 108 respondents to question 11 indicated that the case studies were useful. Additionally 26 students or 24% listed the group discussions as useful. Conversely, six out of 94 respondents, or 5%, thought that the case studies were useless and no students indicated that the group discussions were useless. Eleven out of 91 respondents, or 12%, classified the case studies as enjoyable. Additionally, 17 or 19% of the respondents listed the group discussions in the enjoyable category. Conversely, only one respondent classified the case studies and the group discussions as unpleasant.

Students in the control group may have found these questions confusing given that there were no activities in the regular orientation. The confusion is a likely source of the high percentage of irrelevant comments by the control group. One hundred forty-nine of 256 respondents, or 58%, provided irrelevant comments when asked to name useful activities. The percentage of irrelevant comments for the remaining three questions were 40% for useless, 34% for enjoyable and 69% for unpleasant.

A substantial number of respondents in the control group indicated accurately that there were no activities during the orientation process. When asked to list any activities that they found particularly useful, 21 or 8% of the respondents indicated that there were none. The percentage of respondents who indicated that there were no activities for questions 12, 13, and 14 were as follows: 19% for useless, 4% for enjoyable, and 13% for unpleasant.

The two areas that provided common ground for the study and control groups were the video and developing a student educational plan, which some students labeled "picking classes."

Table 4.4 illustrates the participants' ratings of the orientation video.

Table 4.4 Orientation Video—Usefulness and Enjoyment Levels

Descriptor	Study Group			Control Group		
	n	N	%	n	N	%
Useful	3	108	3%	18	256	7%
Useless	4	94	4%	15	72	21%
Enjoyable	5	91	5%	38	164	23%
Unpleasant	0	77	0%	0	61	0%

The results seem to indicate that the SSP students did not have as much of an opinion on the video as the control group. Apparently SSP participants concentrated their opinion on the case studies and the group discussions. The activities appear to have made a bigger impression on the students than the video did.

The same appears to be true about developing a student educational plan (Table 4.5). More students in the control group seemed to have an opinion on this activity than the SSP respondents did. However, approximately the same percentage of respondents in each group classified developing an educational plan as useful—12% of the study group and 11% of the control group.

Table 4.5 Developing a Student Educational Plan—Usefulness and Enjoyment Levels

Descriptor	Study Group			Control Group		
	n	N	%	n	N	%
Useful	13	108	12%	28	256	11%
Useless	0	94	0%	7	72	10%
Enjoyable	1	91	1%	8	164	5%
Unpleasant	0	77	0%	6	61	10%

Although the regular orientation focused on information, 78 of 90, or 87% of the respondents, in the control group indicated that they had questions that were left unanswered in the orientation. Their questions included such subjects as placement, transfer, IGETC, majors, parking, student educational plans, counseling, financial aid, enrollment procedures, clubs, and special programs. Conversely, an overwhelming 61 of 63 SSP students, or 97% of the respondents, indicated that they had their questions answered. Two possible explanations for the contrasting difference in the data between the study and the control groups regarding question number 15—or the unanswered questions query. First, the emphasis on information in regular orientation may have been overwhelming and caused confusion. Second, because the orientation evaluations for the study group were collected at the orientation, while the evaluations for the control group were mailed approximately two-and-a-half weeks after the orientation, the difference in timing may have given the control group an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the process. An ideal condition would have been to collect the evaluations from both groups at the orientation; however, this was not possible due to logistical restrictions, namely that the control group was intermingled with all the other orientation participants and distributing evaluations would have disrupted the process.

Regarding student satisfaction with the overall orientation process, the study group appears to provide a clear answer by having an overwhelming number of respondents indicating "nothing" to questions 12 and 14. Eighty-two of 94 respondents, or 76%, indicated "nothing" to the question, "Were there any activities that you found particularly useless?" And 75 of 77, or 97% of the respondents, showed their approval by responding "nothing" to the question, "Were there any activities that you found particularly unpleasant?" Conversely, 27 of 108 respondents, or 25%, felt that there was nothing useful and 28 of 91, or 31%, of the respondents indicated that there was nothing enjoyable. The qualitative data collected from the control group, however, failed to make a definitive statement on student satisfaction with the orientation process.

The comments and observations from instructional and counseling faculty who conducted the SSP orientation support the results of the student evaluations. The following quotation from a counselor at the debriefing meeting typifies the positive comments from the staff about the approaches used in orientation.

> I think this is bold. I think that these case studies are... so popular and students really got into them... I mean, it's good. I hope you always have this... That's how strongly I feel about it. I think the benefits will be tremendous. What I like is not only do the students... reinforce what they already know, but also getting in touch what you don't know is just as important, you know, wow!

Later during the same meeting two counselors have the following dialogue:

Counselor A: I just want to say that I would always like to be a part of something like this...

Counselor B: Yeah, it was a great experience.

The participants' enjoyment of the collaborative learning activities was reflected in a very positive, high level of energy generated during the discussion of the case studies. A college administrator who routinely visited the orientation sessions remarked

> You can feel the difference in the level of energy when the students are not involved. I mean, when they're doing the case studies and going up to the board and presenting, the level of energy is very high. And all of a sudden the lecture mode comes on, and they sit back and there's very low energy.

3. Grade Point Average

Table 4.6 shows that the GPA for the two groups was almost identical, a difference of .01. For 148 students in the study group who finished Fall'98 with grades, their mean GPA was 2.09 (on a scale of 0 – 4: Fail = 0; D = 1; C = 2; B = 3; and A = 4). Conversely, for 1,603 students in the control group who ended Fall '98 with grades, their mean GPA was 2.08. I did not calculate the statistical significance due to the small difference in GPA.

In order to determine the student success level, I reviewed and analyzed other measures besides GPA as of the end of Fall '98. Table 4.7 shows the list of measures and

Table 4.6 GPA – Study vs. Control Group

MEASURE	STUDY GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
N	148	1,603
Mean GPA	2.09	2.08
Median GPA	2.04	2.17
St. Dev.	1.16	1.17

the comparison between the study and control groups. In analyzing the data I tried to determine how many students in the study and control groups met each criterion. Before reviewing the results, I remind the reader again, that when I subdivided the study sample, finding statistical significance became problematic.

4. Dean's Honor List

A review of the data shows that a higher percentage of the students in the control group who were enrolled in 12 or more units in Fall '98, ended the semester with a 3.0 GPA or higher, 13% vs. 11%.

5. Probationary Rate

Regarding probation, the control group performed better on both the academic probation and the lack-of-progress measures. Thirty percent of the students in the study sample ended on academic probation vs. 27% in the control group, and a smaller percentage of the students in the control group ended on lack-of-progress probation than

Table 4.7 Other Success Measures

MEASURE	STUDY GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
	n	N	%	n	N	%
Dean's Honor List	17	157	11%	227	1,770	13%
Acad. Prob.	47	157	30%	482	1,770	27%
LOP	6	157	4%	41	1,770	2%
Both	13	157	8%	129	1,770	7%
SUCCESS RATES (C or +/Credit)						
English 1 SSP Class Students Only	19	20	95%	-	-	-
English 1 SSP Students in Non-SSP Classes	34	52	65%	-	-	-
English 1 All Classes	53	72	74%	526	776	68%
English 21A SSP Class Students Only	9	13	69%			
English 21A SSP Students in Non-SSP Classes	12	18	67%			
English 21A All Classes	21	31	68%	228	354	64%
HD 20 SSP Class Students Only	7	9	78%			
HD 20 All Non-SSP Classes				139	214	65%
PERSISTENCE: Fall '98 to Spring '99	130	157	83%	1,410	1,770	80%

in the study sample, as well, 2% vs. 4% respectively. Again, I must point to the difference in the size of the samples, particularly in the lack-of-progress measure. The

disproportionate difference between the two probationary rates is typical of younger first-time community college students. Previous BCC studies have shown that younger first-time students tend to exhibit higher academic probation than lack-of-progress probation rates. Although the causes of this discrepancy have not been studied, it appears that younger inexperienced students lack familiarity with policies and procedures that affect their academic standing. Furthermore, they may have more unrealistic expectations about their own ability to succeed in an academically challenging environment given their non-educational responsibilities.

When the two measures were taken into account, again, a smaller percentage of students in the control group ended on both academic and lack-of-progress probation—7% vs. 8%. The sample size in the study group could very well be a factor in this finding as well.

These percentages are very similar to the Fall'97 cohort of first-time college students at BCC. At the end of Fall '97, out of 1,757 first-time college students, 469 or 26.7% were on academic probation, 62 or 3.5% were on lack-of-progress probation, and 120 or 6.8% were on both.

6. Success Rate

a. English 1

As far as students who enrolled in English classes are concerned, SSP students who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class succeeded at a higher rate. Nineteen of the twenty students, or 95%, who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class passed with a grade of "C" or better or received credit. This rate of success is demonstrably higher than the success rate for the control group of students who enrolled in English 1, which was 68%. Conversely, SSP students who enrolled in non-SSP English 1 classes succeeded at a rate somewhat lower than that of the control group, 65% vs. 68% respectively. Overall, when I combined the success rate in both the SSP English 1 class and the non-English 1 classes, the rate of success for the study group was 74% vs. 68% for the control group. No doubt, the high rate of success in the SSP English 1 class overcompensates for the slightly lower success rate for SSP students in non-SSP English 1 classes.

Further data analysis on success rate for students who enrolled in similar English 1 classes taught by the SSP English 1 instructor, I found that the success rate for two other classes was considerably lower. For example, in Spring '97 the success rate for a similar English 1 class taught by the same instructor was 75%. In Fall '97 the success

rate for her English 1 class was 80%. Although the success rate for the latter class was higher, it was 15% lower than the success rate for the SSP English 1 class.

b. English 21A

Overall, 21 out of 31 SSP students who enrolled in English 21A classes or 68% successfully completed the classes as compared to a 64% success rate in the control group. Thirteen of the 31 students in the study group who enrolled in English 21 selected the section designated as SSP. Nine of the 13, or 69%, successfully completed the course, or five percentage points higher than for the control group.

c. Human Development 20

As in the case of the English classes, SSP students succeeded at a higher rate in the Human Development 20 class than students in the control group as well—78% vs. 65%.

7. Persistence Rate

The level of persistence for the study sample was higher than for the control group, 83% vs. 80% respectively. In reviewing historical persistence rates at BCC for first-time college students from fall to spring for four consecutive years, 1993-1996, I discovered that the persistence rate tends to be around 68% (Table 4.8). Note that the

persistence rate from Fall '93 to Spring '94 was five percentage points lower than for the other three years. This may have been due to the Northridge Earthquake of January

Table 4.8 BCC Historical Persistence Data for All First-time College Students

YEAR	FALL ENROLLMENT	SPRING PERSISTENCE	PERCENT
1993-94	2,580	1,621	63%
1994-95	2,653	1,816	68%
1995-96	2,649	1,812	68%
1996-97	3,106	2,121	68%

1994, which affected BCC, the students in the area, and some travel routes. A review of historical persistence data for first time full-time students at BCC shows that full-time status makes a marked difference (Table 4.9). A full-time student is one who carries 12 or more units during any given semester.

Table 4.9 BCC Historical Persistence Data for First Time Full-time, College Students

YEAR	FALL ENROLLMENT	SPRING PERSISTENCE	PERCENT
1993-94	987	794	80%
1994-95	1,093	955	87%
1995-96	1,180	1,008	85%
1996-97	1,355	1,131	83%

B. Student Success Project Interventions

To determine which intervention(s) had the most effect on students, I calculated the GPA for each of the subgroups (Table 4.8). The problem discussed earlier related to the difficulty in calculating the statistical significance as a result of the sample size was exacerbated when I attempted to analyze the SSP data for each of the subgroups.

1. Orientation

In reviewing Table 4.10, it is clear that although involvement in SSP activities

Table 4.10 GPAs for SSP Subgroups *

SUB-GROUP	*INTERVENTION*	*N*	*MEAN GPA*	*ST. DEV*	*Z*
1	Orientation Only (i.e., no SSP classes, no couns., and no activities)	65	2.04	1.19	
2	SSP English 1	20	2.57	0.88	
3	SSP English 21A	12	2.11	0.93	
4	SSP Human Development 20	8	2.23	0.93	
5	Combination: SSP Eng. 1/Eng. 21A & Human Development 20	6	2.56	0.68	
6	Met with SSP Counselor	38	2.20	1.17	
7	Did not meet with SSP Counselor	110	2.05	1.16	
8	Attended 2+ SSP activities	20	2.51	0.98	2.11*
9	Did not attend any SSP activities	99	1.98	1.21	
10	Combination: SSP Eng. 1/Eng. 21A, HD 20, Counseling, and 2+ activities	2	2.38	0.9	

*All subgroups participated in SSP orientation

*The data for groups 8 and 9 are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

was voluntary, students participated in relatively high numbers. Eighty-three out of 148, or 56%, of the student who finished Fall '98 with grades participated in a second SSP intervention; conversely, 65 or 44% did not. These 65 orientation-only participants earned a mean GPA of 2.04. This statistic was slightly lower than the mean GPA for the entire group, which was 2.09, lower than the mean GPA for students who did not meet with a counselor, 2.07, but higher than for those who did not participate in any SSP out-of-class activities, 1.98.

Table 4.10 shows that the students who earned the highest mean GPA in Fall '98 were those who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class at 2.57. This appears to be an indication that academic preparation plays a key role in academic achievement in college. This argument is supported by the fact that students who enrolled in English 21A, a basic skills class, earned a much lower mean GPA, 2.11, than those who enrolled in English 1, a freshman composition class. The quantitative and qualitative data support a relationship between academic preparation, level of maturity and effectiveness of collaborative learning approaches.

Other high mean GPAs among the subgroups included student s who enrolled in a combination of either English 1 or English 21A and Human Development 20 at 2.56; students who attended 2 or more activities at 2.51; and those who received the most

interventions (i.e., enrolled in an SSP English and human development class, received academic counseling, and participated in 2 or more activities) at 2.38. Except for students who attended 2 or more activities, the statistics for these subgroups should be viewed cautiously due to the small samples.

2. English 1

As stated earlier, the subgroup with the highest mean GPA at 2.57 was not surprisingly composed of students who enrolled in SSP English 1. As a subgroup, these students were apparently better prepared academically as indicated by their placement into college level English. The subgroup's GPA and the size of the sample were particularly encouraging. It is difficult to determine the degree of the effect on academic achievement of collaborative learning approaches using quantitative measures alone. However, all the quantitative data analyzed seem to support the argument that the collaborative approaches used in the SSP English 1 class had a positive effect on the participants. As seen earlier, SSP students who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class had a higher success rate and they earned the highest GPA among all the subgroups. Additional data analysis shows that students who enrolled in similar English 1 classes taught by the SSP English 1 instructor earned a much lower mean GPA. Students who enrolled in this instructor's English 1 class in Spring '97, for example, earned a mean

GPA of 2.27. Similarly, students who enrolled in her English 1 class in Fall '97 earned a mean GPA of 2.33. Additionally, of the 33 students (including non-SSP participants) who enrolled in the SSP English 1 class, 30, or 91%, persisted in Spring '99. Of the 776 students in the control group who enrolled in a regular English 1 class in Fall '98, 664, or 86%, persisted in Spring '99. Finally, of the 2,968 students who enrolled in English 1, (except SSP English 1) in Fall '98, 2,386, or 80%, persisted in Spring '99.

The qualitative measures, which I discuss later in this chapter, seem to indicate that the successful application of collaborative learning approaches in English 1 contributed to the academic success of students. This is particularly evident when both the quantitative and qualitative measures for the two English classes are viewed side by side.

3. English 21A

The twelve students who enrolled in SSP English 21A and completed the course earned a mean GPA of 2.11, or almost one-half of a grade lower than the mean GPA for students who enrolled in SSP English 1. The 2.11 GPA earned by SSP English 21A students is only .02 points higher than the 2.09 mean GPA for the entire SSP study sample. This finding is not surprising since it was most likely as a result of the English

21A students' apparent inferior academic preparation compared to that of the English 1 students.

Although the SSP students who enrolled in English 21A earned a mean GPA that was similar to the mean for the entire study sample, they persisted at a higher rate, 85% vs. 83%. Overall, including non-SSP participants who enrolled in SSP English 21A, 21 out of 23, or 91% of students, persisted in Spring '99. Additionally, of the 354 students in the control group who enrolled in regular English 21A classes, 282, or 80% persisted in Spring '99. Finally, of the 971 students from the general study body who enrolled in English 21A (except SSP English 21A) in Fall '98, 721, or 74%, persisted in Spring '99. Further studies are needed to establish a cause and effect relationship between collaborative learning approaches and high persistence rates. However, the unusually high persistence rate for the SSP English 21A class, and the fact that it was as high as the persistence rate for the SSP English 1 class even though the success rate and GPA were not as high, may be due to the collaborative learning approaches. Although instructors can affect persistence rates, they cannot control them, unlike success rates and GPA; instead, students have the ultimate word on persistence.

4. Human Development 20

The second highest mean GPA among the subgroups belonged to those students who enrolled in a combination of SSP English and Human Development 20; they earned a mean GPA of 2.56. The students who enrolled in SSP Human Development 20 but not in an SSP English class, earned the fifth highest mean GPA at 2.23. Although this GPA is not particularly impressive, it is .14 points higher than the mean GPA for the entire SSP study sample. As with a number of the subgroups, the small sample in both findings must be taken into consideration in formulating generalizations.

5. Academic Counseling

The data on academic counseling were gathered during Fall '98 and Winter '99. Eighty-nine counseling appointments were made; 57, or 64%, of the appointments showed, and 32, or 36%, did not. A total of 38 students met with the SSP counselor: 25 met with her once, and 13 met with her twice. The topics discussed during counseling sessions varied. They included such subjects as academic difficulties, career advisement, developing a student educational plan, financial aid, transfer information, and referrals to student support services (Table 4.11).

The data pertaining to students who met with the SSP counselor vs. those who did not are deceiving. Table 4.10 shows that the students who met with the SSP counselor

Table 4.11 Academic Counseling Topics

COUNSELING TOPIC	N	%
Developing a Student Educational Plan	41	72%
Class Referrals	16	28%
Transfer Assistance	11	19%
Career Advisement	9	16%
Academic Difficulty	7	12%
Assistance w/ Majors	7	12%
Referral to Student Support Services	7	12%
Academic Advisement	6	11%
Financial Aid Information	6	11%
EOPS Information/Referrals	5	9%
IGETC	5	9%

earned a mean GPA of 2.20 vs. 2.05 for those who did not. During the Winter '99 session, following the Fall '98 semester, the staff targeted students who finished Fall '98 on probation for counseling appointments. In addition, in some instances students who felt a "connection" with the SSP counselor may have requested on their own to meet with her, especially if they were experiencing academic difficulty. These two factors may have skewed the GPA data in favor of students who did not meet with the SSP counselor. For this reason, I did not calculate the statistical significance for these two subgroups.

6. Activities

The comparison between students who attended two or more SSP out-of-class activities vs. those who did not attend any provides one of the most striking statistics. A .53 difference in mean GPA separates the two subgroups in favor of those who attended two or more SSP activities at 2.51 vs. 1.98 for those who did not attend any. Using a one-tailed test at the 95% confidence level, I found a statistical significance between the mean GPA for the two groups. Quite possibly, other intervening factors may have played a role in this finding. Further investigation and data analysis beyond the scope of this study would be required to determine which factor(s) influenced the outcome of the intervention. Without additional investigation, I cannot establish a cause and effect relationship. However, what is clear is that some questions remain unanswered about the students who participated in two or more activities vs. those who did not participate in any. Students who participated in two or more activities may have

- had a higher degree of motivation,
- experienced a stronger level of connectedness with other students, staff and/or the institution,
- had a more flexible schedule, or
- had a more sociable personality.

123

Any combination of these factors may have predisposed the students to participate in out-of-class activities.

A second striking statistic revealed by Table 4.10 is that the subgroup that did not attend any out-of-class activities earned the lowest mean GPA of all the subgroups at 1.98. Next to this subgroup in ninth place from high to low GPA are those students who did not receive any intervention in addition to orientation at 2.04. These two subgroups plus the subgroup that did not meet with the counselor not only had the dubious distinction of earning a lower GPA than the cohort at-large, but they appear to have failed to attain social and academic integration as indicated by their lack of participation. The reasons for this lack of connectedness are unclear and open to speculation. Investigating the causes of this behavior is beyond the scope of this study. However, conducting an investigative study with students in these three subgroups may provide some invaluable indications as to what prevented these students from achieving the desired social and academic integration and whether the obstacles were individual or institutional in nature. The findings of such a follow-up study may prove beneficial for future attempts to replicate the present study.

C. CCSEQ

The CCSEQ yielded massive amounts of valuable data that could be used for a number of purposes. Potential uses include: assessing the effectiveness of the SSP interventions, gauging the participants' perceived gains toward important goals and skill acquisition, as well as their effort to benefit from services available. On a more global scale, CCSEQ data could also be used for planning future interventions, making adjustments in the design of the project for replication purposes, and making recommendations for college-wide institutional planning. Because analyzing the voluminous data generated by the CCSEQ is beyond the scope of this project, I limited the analysis to providing an overview of the outcomes and pointing to major patterns of student behavior and perceptions.

Forty-one, or 21.9% of the students in the study group returned the CCSEQ, while 312 out of 1,770 or 17.6% of students in the control group did. I reviewed the gender, age and ethnic distribution of the students who returned the CCSEQ to determine whether the two groups were comparable. As Table 4.12 indicates, the two groups were almost identical in terms of the gender distribution. A point of interest is that female students outnumbered male students almost on a two-to-one ratio, a pattern that repeated itself on every survey, evaluation form, or questionnaire that the staff received from both groups. The effect of this gender imbalance on the survey results is unknown.

Table 4.12 CCSEQ: Gender Distribution, Study and Control Group

GENDER	GENDER DISTRIBUTION					
Value Label	Value		Frequency		Valid Percent	
	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group
Male	1	1	15	111	36.6%	36.0%
Female	2	2	26	197	63.4%	64.0%
Missing Cases			0	4		
TOTAL			41	312		
Valid Cases			41	308	100%	100%
Mean	1.634	1.640				
Std Dev	0.488	0.481				

As far as the age distribution is concerned (Table 4.13), the two groups were very similar. In both groups the great majority, almost 80% of the participants, were in the 18-19 year-old age bracket, which previous studies at BCC have shown are the most at-risk in terms of probationary rates and institutional departure when compared to other age ranges.

Table 4.14 shows that there were some tangible differences in the ethnic distribution between the study and control groups. The percentage of Asian students in the study sample who returned the CCSEQ is seven percent higher than the percent of Asians who returned it in the control group. Similarly, the percent of Hispanic

128

Table 4.13 CCSEQ: Age Distribution, Study and Control Group

AGE RANGE	AGE DISTRIBUTION					
Value Label	Value		Frequency		Valid Percent	
	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group
18 – 19 or younger	1	1	32	246	78.0%	79.9%
20 – 22	2	2	3	26	7.3%	8.4%
23 – 27	3	3	2	22	4.9%	7.1%
28 – 39	4	4	1	9	2.4%	2.9%
40 – 55	5	5	3	4	7.3%	1.3%
Over 55	6	6	0	1		0.3%
Missing cases			0	4		
Total			41	312		
Valid cases			41	308	100%	100%
Mean	1.537	1.383				
Std Dev	1.185	0.882				

participation is nine percent higher in the study group. The percent of Whites is similar in both groups. However, the percent of Blacks in the study sample is approximately four percentage points smaller. The ethnic composition of both the study and control group of CCSEQ respondents is very similar to that of the student body of BCC, particularly with the control group. This may be as a result of the sample size being larger in the control group than the study group.

127

Table 4.14 CCSEQ: Ethnic Distribution, Study and Control Group

RACE/ETHNICITY	ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION					
Value Label	Value		Frequency		Valid Percent	
	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group	Study Group	Control Group
American Indian	1	1	0	1	0.0%	0.3%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	2	2	10	53	24.4%	17.4%
Black, African Amer.	3	3	3	35	7.3%	11.5%
Hispanic	4	4	14	78	34.1%	25.7%
White	5	5	13	93	31.7%	30.6%
Other	6	6	1	44	2.4%	14.5%
Missing Cases			0	8		
Total			41	312		
Valid Cases			41	304	100%	100%
Mean	3.805	4.122				
Std Dev	1.209	1.311				

Given that skills were emphasized in both the SSP English and Human Development 20 classes, it is not surprising that SSP students scored higher than the control group in the learning and study skills areas of the CCSEQ. Table 4.15 shows that the study group felt that they had received more instructions in seven out of nine learning and study skills areas than the control group. (A plus or minus sign appears under "Study Group" in each category indicating whether the mean was higher for the study or the control group.) This statistic confirms the SSP teachers' effort to ensure that students

Table 4.15 CCSEQ Learning and Study Skills Items: Percentages of Responses

ITEM	GROUP	RESPONSE		
		None	Some	A lot
Received instruction in each of the following areas:				
Memory skills	Study Group (+)	29.3	26.8	43.9
	Control Group	33.5	49.0	17.4
Note taking skills	Study Group (+)	14.6	46.3	39.0
	Control Group	23.5	47.7	28.7
Listening skills	Study Group (+)	26.8	34.1	39.0
	Control Group	29.8	38.5	31.7
Speaking skills	Study Group (+)	36.6	36.6	26.8
	Control Group	39.4	43.2	17.4
Writing skills	Study Group (-)	7.3	48.8	43.9
	Control Group	8.7	39.7	51.6
Reading skills	Study Group (+)	17.5	42.5	40.0
	Control Group	24.8	41.3	33.9
Test taking skills	Study Group (-)	32.5	40.0	27.5
	Control Group	26.2	52.8	21.0
Time management skills	Study Group (+)	29.3	41.5	29.3
	Control Group	37.4	45.2	17.4
Problem solving skills	Study Group (+)	26.8	46.3	26.8
	Control Group	34.2	51.6	14.2

acquired these skills. It also substantiates what the students said during in-depth interviews about the classes and the instructors.

I was somewhat surprised and puzzled, however, that the mean for the control group in the writing skills category was higher than for the study group, in view of the fact that the SSP English classes focused on writing. Further inquiry is needed as to how many students who enrolled in the English classes actually returned the CCSEQ. The two groups were evenly divided, with each group having a higher mean than the other on four out of eight faculty activities (Table 4.16). SSP participants had an academic counselor, who happened to be a career counselor as well, assigned to them, and most likely students in the control group did not. For this reason, it is possible that SSP students saw items five and eight (discussed career plans and personal issues with instructor) as items that they would normally discuss with their counselor rather than with their instructor. As far as item number three is concerned (made an appointment to meet with my instructor), the outcome is somewhat disconcerting. Again, further investigation is needed to determine how many of the students enrolled in SSP English classes returned the CCSEQ. The reader will note that in the qualitative data analysis section, the English 21A teacher mentions that she required students to make appointments for individual

Table 4.16 CCSEQ Faculty Activities Items: Percentages of Responses

ITEM	GROUP	RESPONSE			
		Never	Occas.	Often	Very often
1. Asked instructor for information	Study Group (-)	24.4	53.7	14.6	7.3
	Control Group	17.0	45.7	27.3	10.0
2. Talked briefly w/ instructor	Study Group (+)	51.2	34.1	12.2	2.4
	Control Group	57.1	30.3	10.3	2.3
3. Made appt. to meet w/ instructor	Study Group (-)	31.7	48.8	14.6	4.9
	Control Group	26.9	43.0	24.9	5.2
4. Discussed paper ideas w/ instructor	Study Group (+)	46.3	31.7	22.0	0.0
	Control Group	55.2	30.6	11.3	2.9
5. Discussed career plans w/ instructor	Study Group (-)	31.7	41.5	22.0	4.9
	Control Group	27.5	45.6	20.7	6.1
6. Discussed comments made on test or paper	Study Group (+)	51.2	31.7	9.8	7.3
	Control Group	52.6	34.8	10.0	2.6
7. Talked informally w/ instructor	Study Group (+)	53.7	26.8	17.1	2.4
	Control Group	58.7	31.0	8.4	1.9
8. Discussed personal issues w/ instructor	Study Group (-)	39.0	34.1	22.0	4.9
	Control Group	38.2	33.7	19.1	9.1

conferences to discuss their progress, and she commented that students reported for their appointments "dutifully." In the case of students enrolled in SSP English 1, they may or may not have had to make an appointment with the instructor. Since there were no classes scheduled following the English 1 class, and the teacher made herself available after class to talk to students in the classroom individually and in small groups, this activity may have taken the place of office appointments.

The directions in the CCSEQ for the section titled "Estimate of Gains," read as follows: "In thinking over your experiences in this college up to now, to what extent do you think you have gained or made progress in each of the following areas?" Twenty-three statements follow these instructions. Table 4.17 illustrates that the control group had a higher mean in 14 out of the 23 areas. At first glance this figure might appear be an indictment of the project. However, a closer look at some of the individual statements that generated a lower mean score for the study group reveals a logical reason for this outcome. These are the statements in question:

6. Developing understanding of literature

14. Understanding the role of science and technology

17. Speaking another language

19. Interest in political and economic events

Table 4.17 CCSEQ Estimate of Gains Items: Percentages of Responses

ITEM	GROUP	RESPONSE			
		Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1. Acquiring skills for specific job	Study Group (+)	34.1	39.0	17.1	9.8
	Control Group	40.8	34.3	17.5	7.4
2. Gaining info. about career opportunities	Study Group (+)	31.7	39.0	7.3	22.0
	Control Group	36.5	36.8	19.7	7.1
3. Developing clearer career goals	Study Group (+)	22.0	43.9	14.6	19.5
	Control Group	28.4	35.5	24.2	11.9
4. Learning about diff. fields of knowledge	Study Group (-)	22.0	46.3	22.0	9.8
	Control Group	19.7	33.2	35.8	11.3
5. Understanding art, music, theater	Study Group (+)	39.0	19.5	26.8	14.6
	Control Group	38.3	27.9	21.1	12.7
6. Developing understanding of literature	Study Group (-)	22.0	48.8	14.6	14.6
	Control Group	23.5	33.9	28.7	14.0
7. Writing clearly and effectively	Study Group (+)	4.9	29.3	43.9	22.0
	Control Group	12.0	31.5	34.1	22.4
8. Presenting ideas effectively in speaking	Study Group (+)	29.3	22.0	31.7	17.1
	Control Group	24.3	39.5	24.6	11.7
9. Acquiring ability to use computers	Study Group (-)	31.7	31.7	14.6	22.0
	Control Group	29.8	27.5	22.7	20.1
10. Becoming aware of dif. philosophies	Study Group (+)	22.0	34.1	19.5	24.4
	Control Group	20.6	32.9	30.3	16.1
11. Clarifying own values	Study Group (-)	31.7	29.3	14.6	24.4
	Control Group	20.8	33.4	31.5	14.3
12. Understanding own abilities & interests	Study Group (-)	17.1	26.8	39.0	17.1
	Control Group	15.2	30.3	32.3	22.3

Table 4.17 (Continued) CCSEQ Estimate of Gains Items: Percentages of Responses

ITEM	GROUP	RESPONSE			
		Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very Much
13. Understanding mathematical concepts	Study Group (+)	39.0	29.3	22.0	9.8
	Control Group	44.2	29.5	17.9	8.4
14. Understanding role of science & tech.	Study Group (-)	51.2	19.5	22.0	7.3
	Control Group	39.9	34.4	18.5	7.1
15. Putting ideas together	Study Group (-)	22.0	41.5	22.0	14.6
	Control Group	17.1	40.3	30.3	12.3
16. Developing ability to learn on own	Study Group (-)	22.0	36.6	24.4	17.1
	Control Group	14.8	31.0	34.5	19.7
17. Speaking another language	Study Group (-)	56.1	26.8	9.8	7.3
	Control Group	59.8	19.6	12.1	8.5
18. Interpreting information--charts & graphs	Study Group (+)	46.3	31.7	9.8	12.2
	Control Group	45.8	30.5	17.9	5.8
19. Interest in political and economic event	Study Group (-)	48.8	36.6	7.3	7.3
	Control Group	54.7	24.3	13.6	7.4
20. Seeing importance of history	Study Group (-)	46.3	19.5	24.4	9.8
	Control Group	33.5	30.0	21.6	14.8
21. Learning about other parts of the world	Study Group (-)	34.1	34.1	19.5	12.2
	Control Group	35.0	30.7	22.7	11.7
22. Understanding--getting along w/ others	Study Group (-)	24.4	22.0	31.7	22.0
	Control Group	14.3	26.6	32.5	26.6
23. Developing good health habits	Study Group (-)	43.9	31.7	17.1	7.3
	Control Group	46.0	29.1	12.0	12.9

20. Seeing the importance of history

In order to score high in these statements, students must have enrolled in related subjects. Because SSP participants were encouraged to enroll in English, mathematics, and Human Development 20, very few students had the opportunity to enroll in other classes, especially part-time students. The control group, however, probably did not receive such encouragement; therefore, they most likely took a wider array of classes. Other items, where project participants had a lower mean than the control group, raise some concerns about why SSP students feel that they did not gain as much as the control group. These items include:

9. Acquiring ability to use computers

11. Clarifying own values

12. Understanding own abilities & interests

22. Understanding—getting along with others

23. Developing good health habits

These topics constitute a well-rounded education and they should be covered, particularly with first-time college students. The CCSEQ could play a key role in reviewing the content of orientation, as well as the curriculum, to ensure that students make gains toward these and other valuable goals.

Not surprisingly, SSP students also had a lower mean score than the control group in areas such as science activities, athletic activities, and vocational skills. The SSP group performed better than the control group in key areas that contribute toward social and academic integration, such as

- Studied course materials with other students
- Talked about theater with other students at the college
- Attended an art exhibit on the campus
- Attended a concert or other musical event at the college
- Talked with a counselor about courses, requirements, education plans
- Discussed your vocational interests, abilities and ambitions with a counselor

H. Qualitative Data Analysis

The literature on student retention and persistence presents a myriad of factors that prevent some community college students from succeeding. These factors range from academic to personality, from intrinsic to extrinsic, and from personal, such as financial, to institutional. I conducted in-depth interviews with 17 SSP students selected at random from each of the SSP subgroups to answer the research questions. One of the questions calls for identifying some of the factors that may have interfered with the students' transition from high school to college.

Tables 4.18 and 4.19 contain demographic and academic data on students who participated in the interview part of the qualitative data collection process.

Although a $20 stipend was offered to the prospective interviewees, the staff found it necessary to make follow-up telephone calls to targeted students to inquire as to their interest, and schedule and to confirm appointments. Even after the staff made appointments for prospective interviewees, some of them did not show. In every single instance when a student did not make his or her original appointment, the staff made an attempt to re-contact the student and reschedule the appointment. The staff was successful in some instances, but not in all. This lack of student response resulted in a

Table 4.18 In-depth Interviewees—Demographic Data

CATEGORY	*MALE*	*FEMALE*
Ethnicity		
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
Black Non-Hispanic	1	0
Hispanic	3	8
White	0	1
Other Non-White	0	1
Non-Respondent	0	1
TOTAL	**5**	**12**

Table 4.19 In-depth Interviewees—Academic Data

CATEGORY	*MALE*	*FEMALE*
GPA		
0.0-0.99	1	0
1.0-1.99	3	2
2.0-2.99	1	3
3.0-3.99	0	7
4.0	0	0
TOTAL	**5**	**12**
Probation		
Academic	4	2
Lack-of-Progress	0	0
TOTAL	**4**	**2**
Dean's Honor List	**0**	**5**
SSP Classes		
SSP English 1	2	4
SSP English 21A	1	2
SSP Human Development 20	0	0
SSP English 1 & HD 20	0	1
SSP English 21A & HD 20	1	3
TOTAL	**4**	**10**
No SSP Class	**1**	**2**

gender and ethnic imbalance among the interviewees. Table 4.18 shows that female students outnumbered males by a margin larger than 2:1. Also, no White males or Black females participated in the interview process. Furthermore, the sample was skewed in favor of female Hispanics, who made up 47% of the interviewees. Academically, the females tended to be on the higher end of the GPA scale than the males, who outnumbered the females by a 2:1 ratio in the academic probation category. The non-respondent sample (Tables 4.20 and 4.21) was much more balanced than those who actually participated in the interviews.

I offer one theory based on comments made by those who participated in the

Table 4.20 In-depth Interview Non-Respondents—Demographic Data

CATEGORY	*MALE*	*FEMALE*
Ethnicity		
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	4
Black Non-Hispanic	2	1
Hispanic	1	3
White	3	3
Other Non-White	0	0
Non-Respondent	0	0
TOTAL	**8**	**11**

Table 4.21 In-depth Interview Non-Respondents—Academic Data

CATEGORY	*MALE*	*FEMALE*
GPA		
0.0-0.99	2	3
1.0-1.99	1	1
2.0-2.99	2	6
3.0-3.99	2	1
4.0	1	0
TOTAL	**8**	**11**
Probation		
Academic	3	4
Lack-of-Progress	2	1
TOTAL	**5**	**5**
Dean's Honor List	**2**	**0**
SSP Classes		
SSP English 1	1	1
SSP English 21A	1	3
SSP Human Development 20	1	1
SSP English 1 & HD 20	0	1
SSP English 21A & HD 20	0	0
TOTAL	**3**	**6**
No SSP Class	**5**	**5**

interviews as to the high number of students who did not respond to the interview invitation. The theory is that the students who did not enroll in SSP classes tended to feel less integrated/connected than those who did. Although the number of non-respondents is rather small, 19, and the number of non-SSP-class-enrollees within that subgroup even smaller, 10, the latter still represents 52% of the former.

Questions

1. **Question 2 – What are some of the factors that prevent community college students from succeeding?**

Student Success Project participants cited a number of factors that made their transition from high school to college difficult when asked, "How smooth has it been for you to go from high school to college?" Some of these factors included:

a. academic adjustment

b. environmental adjustment

c. lack of familiarity with the system in college (i.e., scheduling, adding and dropping classes)

d. isolation

e. commuting, and

f. job responsibilities, especially off-campus jobs

a. Academic Adjustment

Although some students felt that adjusting to the academic environment had been difficult for them, others felt that college was similar to high school. In most of the cases, the answer depended on the student's previous academic preparation. Students who attended private high schools felt that they really did not have to make an academic adjustment. They felt that the expectations in college were similar to those in high school. Conversely, students who had attended public high schools felt that they did have to make an adjustment to be successful. This is a typical comment from students who fell in the latter category:

> ... the classes are harder, they require more of your attention and more of your time, and, you know, it's nothing compared to high school.

One student in particular who ran cross-country in high school had the foresight and the level of maturity to recognize that college was going to require an academic adjustment. He avoided cross-country in college and concentrated on academics. He found that his own adjustment actually afforded him more time to study. He said,

> ...in high school... most of my time was going to running so... I would be up all night sometimes, you know, just trying to study because I'd get home from workout and I'd be dead, so it would be hard to adjust. Once I got here [BCC] it was like I didn't run in the cross-country season so I was like - wow, I actually have time to study. I kind of liked it. It was better for me.

Not all students, however, made the adjustment to college successfully or in time to avoid academic difficulties. One of the students that I interviewed who ended Fall '98 on academic probation, admitted that if she had to do it over, she would study more. She confided,

> I would study more at the beginning so that I could get better grades. I didn't study as [hard], that's why I didn't pass one of my classes last semester.

b. Environmental Adjustment

Students also cited the environment as something that they had to get used to, such as having older students in classes and the size of the college. Although being in classes with older students required an adjustment, one interviewee viewed it as a positive learning experience. In cases where the students came from a small high school, the adjustment to being on a campus of over 24,000 students required a significant effort on their part. One student in particular who attended a small Catholic high school had this to say about her transition from high school to college:

> At first, for me personally, I was kind of scared. To me this is a lot different. I came from a school with 300 students all together... Three-hundred-twenty girls is all there was in the school, so coming to a bigger school kind of scared me because I'm not a friendly person. I'm not outgoing and outspoken to go up to meet people, so it was kind of scary.

Another student who had attended a magnet school and who was one of 86 students in the graduating class of 1998 had a similar experience adjusting to the size of the college.

c. Lack of Familiarity with the System

Learning to navigate the educational process at the college level was another theme that recurred during the interviews, particularly being first-time college students and not having priority registration. The policy at BCC calls for continuing students in good academic standing to have priority over all other groups such as continuing students on probation and new students. One interviewee indicated experiencing difficulty enrolling in the classes that he needed. He expressed his difficulty very succinctly by saying,

> It's been rough, like I said, the first semester of class because I was a freshman and it was hard to get into my classes because, as you know, people with more credits that have been here longer have first priority. It's hard for freshmen to get the classes they want, specially English or math class.

Because of this potential difficulty, some SSP students took advantage of the availability of SSP English classes by opting to enroll in them.

d. Isolation

Tinto (1993, p. 50) identifies the feeling of isolation as one of the factors that contributes to student departure. He defines isolation as "the absence of sufficient interactions whereby integration may be achieved." He goes on to say that

> That social isolation is often a primary cause of voluntary withdrawal leads us to a deeper appreciation of the often cited fact that withdrawal from institutions of higher education is most frequent in the first semester of the freshman year. It is... a period of transition in which the individual has to make a number of adjustments and endure at least temporary isolation. (p. 58)

A number of the interviewees intimated that they also had to learn to cope with isolation. One in particular described the experience of coming to college the very first day as "scary." Below is the excerpt from this interview:

Interviewer:	So it was a little intimidating, from what I hear you say, coming to a large school. So are you saying that your transition was a little difficult?
Student:	Yeah. I didn't even want to come to school the first day
Interviewer:	What could have made it smoother?
Student:	I guess if the classes that I was going into I knew a lot of people and people from my old school. There's girls that come here, like five girls that come here from my old school, but I really don't talk to them and they're in my classes. And so, I'd really like to have a good friend in at least some of the classes I was going into, then that would have made it easier. Then I'd have somebody to go into the classes. But I had no one and I didn't know anyone.

This student was fortunate to have the moral support from her mother, which helped to offset the isolation in college. From the rest of the excerpt below I sensed that her mother was instrumental in the student making a successful transition to college.

Interviewer: ... [W]ould you do anything to help smooth the transition?

Student: No. It's kind of better like this, you know. It's kind of . . . you know you have to face it, so you might as well go for it. I wouldn't do anything different. I had my Mom in the morning telling me, "It's okay; you're not the first girl going to college and you're going to be fine." So that, you know, hearing her say that to me, **it helped me out a little bit.** [Emphasis added.] I'm the one that has to actually go to this school and face everybody.

Interviewer: ...[I]t sounds like you have support from your Mom and you discuss school things with your Mom. So **is that helpful?** [Emphasis added.]

Student: **It's really helpful** [Emphasis added.] [be]cause I can go to her and say, "I'm so scared I don't want to go to school." And she says, "Well, you're going to have to go, you know. Face it. You're not the only one going to college; you're not the first girl going to college and in the long run you're helping yourself out. It's not going to help you being scared and staying at home." So she brought me to school. [Laughter] She made me stay at the restaurant across the street... and she stayed there and she was like, "Well, good luck." You're going to be in school.

As further testimony that this student had the moral support of her family, later in the interview I learned that her mother had accompanied her to the SSP theater event, which was open to relatives and friends.

Some interviewees mentioned that some of their high school friends were also attending BCC. While reviewing GPAs I discovered that having friends from high school at the college did not automatically translate into good grades. Three of the 17 interviewees indicated that they had friends from their high school at the college, some even enrolled in the same classes. Two of the three were male and one was a female. The latter mentioned that there were 35-40 students from her high school at BCC and that she liked that because she could always count on someone helping her navigate the system. She ended the fall semester with a 3.25 GPA and on the Dean's Honor List, while the two males ended on academic probation with a 1.75 and a 1.67 respectively. When asked how smooth the transition had been from high school to college, one of the male students said that it was "all right," the other responded,

> Pretty smooth. I have a bunch of friends from high school who also come here so I interact with them a lot. It feels like high school again.

The former male student claims to have decided to attend BCC to play basketball. He had four friends from high school in his SSP English class who happened to have played basketball with him in high school. Although I did not discuss these two students' academic performance in high school and college, nor their friends', it is clear to me that their perception of their academic performance in college is somewhat unrealistic.

Apparently, the kinds of friends one chooses to associate with in college may influence one's perception of reality as well as one's academic performance.

e. Commuting

Five of the 17 SSP students interviewed considered commuting a problem, which appears to be exacerbated by the magnetism of BCC. Although some students may live closer to other community colleges, they opt to attend BCC because of its reputation as a premier transfer institution to the UC and the CSU systems. Although some of the students commuted by car, many commuted very long distances by bus. They reported having to travel up to one-and-a-half hours and taking three buses to arrive at BCC. Students cited the long commute as one of the obstacles that prevented them from becoming involved in out-of-class activities such as attending the play with their SSP English class. One female student, in particular, failed to attend the evening at the theater with the SSP English classes due to lack of transportation and safety concerns. When asked if she had attended the theater event, she responded,

> I was going to and I signed up and everything, but I didn't have a ride from home and I couldn't . . . [I]t was going to be late at night and nobody could pick me up.

Given the safety concerns, her lack of participation in this particular activity is certainly understandable.

Commuting affected not only student involvement in activities, but also enrollment in the SSP English 2 class in Spring '99 due to the early starting time of 8:00 a.m.

f. Job Responsibilities

As stated earlier, according the National Center for Education Statistics, in October of 1995, 47% of full-time college students and 83% of part-time students worked. In describing the profile of community college students, in general, Cohen (1996, pp. 48 and 52) states that they are from a lower socioeconomic status than their counterparts at universities. He also points out that in 1993, community colleges enrolled 47% of ethnic minority students and they tended to be from low income families. This profile fits a number of the SSP students at BCC. Yezenia, a fictitious name, a recent immigrant from Guatemala and probably not an atypical student at BCC, enrolled in computer design classes and acquired the skills that she is applying to one of her part-time jobs. Her situation was made worse by the fact that her mother had an accident and Yezenia had to substitute for her at work in order to maintain the family income. Below is an excerpt from the interview.

Interviewer: Were you working in the fall?
Yezenia: Yes, but like part-time helping my Mom. And right now I have a job, a stable job, and it's been more... because it's kind of difficult, my story. But we're like working hard,

studying hard. That's why I never have too much time. It's everything organized but I just have specific time, like... I don't know how to say it, but I have time to [do] my homework and everything but nothing more.

Interviewer: You said that you were helping your Mom. How many hours a week were you working in the fall? More or less.

Yezenia: I couldn't tell because she's a baby sitter and she's a housekeeper, too, so sometimes I have to go over there. But it's different hours, different days. I haven't calculated [the hours that I work per week].

Interviewer: So it varies from week to week?

Yezenia: Yes, different days, different hours. Sometimes it's like ten hours, sometimes it's like five.... She had an accident so it was like difficult, too.

Interviewer: So, did you have to take over her responsibilities as a housekeeper?

Yezenia: Yes. I had to go and clean houses, and attend some other jobs that they just come like a job they come just for a week. That's it.

Interviewer: So is your Mom okay now? Is she back working?

Yezenia: Well, yes, but not like before because she [is] still... going to... therapy and everything, so I'm still helping her....

Interviewer: You said that now you have a steady job?

Yezenia: Yes. I'm working just on Sundays and I'm helping my Mom with them. It's not a full-time job because I'm studying, but _____ [Inaudible].

Interviewer: What do you do?

Yezenia: I'm a cash register at Sizzler.

Interviewer: Okay.

Yezenia: And I'm working right now for a firm that I'm going to finish... [in] two days. Three [more] days... and I'm finished. It's a project. That's the other thing that I like because they have ads... for student [jobs at the Job Center]. And it's a firm, [an] international firm of CAD [Computer Aided Design].... I showed them [the] portfolio that I made here and [in] Guatemala.... He liked my work

and he told me, "Oh, you're coming from BCC." He studied here too. And now he owns that firm and I'm working there. So it's like working in my home whenever I can and I get paid for the project when it's finished...

Interviewer: So, do you [work at your] computer at home...?

Yezenia: Yes, I'm working. I... have a _____ [Inaudible] auto CAD and I [draw] my little plans.... So it's been great because I'm studying hard to get the knowledge quicker.... I just have two classes.... And I learn fast. Now I can work using the knowledge that I learned here.

In spite of her many responsibilities, Yezenia maintained her focus on academics and ended the semester with a 2.33 GPA. She did not, however, take any general education courses. Instead, she concentrated exclusively on classes related to her major, which may have helped her academic performance as a result of her interest and abilities.

Job responsibilities presented obstacles for SSP students in terms of student involvement. The problems caused by lack of student involvement were exacerbated by either commuting or lack of transportation. Students needed to make adjustments when they started college. SSP students who held jobs had to make at least two adjustments: attending college and holding a job. As one student put it, when asked why her transition was difficult,

> I guess because I have a part-time job and I have to rush everywhere sometimes to study and in high school I never did... And sometimes I used to go to the [Student Success Project] meetings they had, but now that I started to work I have to go to start work right away so I can't make it anymore.

Job responsibilities, without a doubt, prevented some SSP students from achieving student involvement, which Astin (1985, p. 134) defines as:

> ... the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. A highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends a lot of time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently, with faculty members and other students. Conversely, an uninvolved student may neglect studies, spend little time on campus, abstain from extracurricular activities, and have little contact with faculty members or other students.

Needless to say, lack of student involvement appears to have contributed to a lack of social integration among SSP students who worked. In turn, students who were unable to achieve social integration also earned a lower GPA. Five of the 17 students I interviewed indicated that they did not feel connected to other students. The GPAs for these five students were .50, 1.25, 1.65, 1.75 and 2.45, and the mean was 1.52. One of these five students responded in the following fashion when asked how connected she felt to other students at BCC:

> I don't really feel connected. I guess that's partly my fault because I'm not one to try to connect with people, but I just sit back and I watch people and I see that everyone has someone to talk to and everyone seems connected here. I just don't allow myself to be connected. I do have friends and I do talk to them, but like in between classes when I don't have anything, I see everybody, and everybody is in a group and they're talking. But with students, I smile at them. They don't make me turn away with

> fear or intimidation; I'm able to smile at them when I pass them by. I'm somewhat connected with them. They don't scare me away.

The fact that she can smile at other students when she passes them by and they don't scare her away does not support the statement that she feels "somewhat connected with them." "Feeling connected" is very subjective, however.

Job responsibilities certainly played a major role in student success or the lack thereof. A student who was working 30-36 hours per week attempted to adjust his class schedule by reducing the number of units. He dropped from four to two classes in Fall '98. In spite of the adjustment, he ended the semester on academic probation with a .50 GPA. Having a deficit on one's academic transcript after the first semester, with the prospect of more difficult times ahead as a result of job obligations, is a difficult and discouraging way to begin one's college experience.

Given his lack of student involvement, it is not surprising that this student has not achieved social integration. When asked if he felt connected to other students, he responded,

> Not really. I haven't really been talking to them too much because I usually just come in and leave. I'll come to class and then I'll leave and go home.

This student meets Astin's definition of an uninvolved student.

2. **Question 3 – What effect do *collaborative learning* approaches used in English classes have on student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence?**

English faculty members employed a variety of collaborative approaches in the SSP classes, including simulations, peer editing, small group and class discussions. Before I begin the qualitative data analysis related to teaching and learning approaches, I will review briefly some of the quantitative data presented earlier. The mean GPA for the study group was 2.09, while the mean GPAs for students who enrolled in SSP English 1 and SSP English 21A were 2.66 and 2.39, respectively. In addition, 19 out of 20 or 95% of the students who enrolled in SSP English 1 successfully completed the class (with a grade of C or better or Credit). Also, nine out of 13 or 69% of the students who enrolled in SSP English 21A successfully completed the class. Conversely, 526 out of 776 or 68% of the students in the control group successfully completed English 1. And finally, 228 out of 354 or 64% of the students in the control group successfully completed English 21A.

Fourteen out of the 17 students I interviewed were enrolled in either SSP English 1 or SSP English 21A. All of the SSP students I interviewed expressed satisfaction with the collaborative approaches employed by the English instructors. Also, for most

students, this was their first exposure to the collaborative approach. The only exceptions were those few students who had attended private high schools. They indicated that they had exposure to collaborative activities in high school English classes. All 14 students interviewed enjoyed the activities and reported that other students in the class also enjoyed the collaborative activities.

a. English 1

English 1 at BCC is a college level class that meets the requirement for the Associate in Arts Degree and is one of two English classes required to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The SSP English 1 instructor was a tenure track teacher who specializes in ESL (English as a Second Language) and has had many years of experience using collaborative learning approaches. I personally selected her to teach in SSP as a result of my previous collaboration with her in other BCC special programs.

Before reviewing the students' comments about the class activities, I will share some of the teacher's comments directly from her journal to answer the following questions: 1) How does the teacher set the tone for the use of a collaborative approach? 2) Did the teacher employ collaborative approaches? If so, what are they? 3) In the eyes of the teacher, what is the outcome of using a collaborative approach?

i. Setting the Tone

From the outset, setting the tone for using collaborative techniques is critical in establishing the elements that make up the learning process as well as the principles of collaborative learning. Some of these principles include: interdependence among students, learning as an active process, integration of new material with the old knowledge, creation of something new with information and ideas (Leigh Smith and MacGregor, p. 10). In the following passage from the instructor's journal, she describes an activity that the students participated in on the second class meeting.

> Thursday, September 3, 1998, Week 1
>
> After introducing the syllabus, I gave everyone a 3x5 index card (Tables 4.19 and 4.20). Each person had to pull out his or her homework assignment and identify what they thought was the most important reason for learning to write well. They also had to identify what they thought was the most important characteristic of good writing. Then students walked around the room and surveyed classmates so that they got five names and reasons on one side and five names and characteristics on the other. I had several goals in mind:
>
> 1) To help students get to know one another.
> 2) To get students to begin sharing phone numbers so that they have some one to call if they miss classes or need clarification of an assignment.
> 3) To help students to see that their classmates are good sources of information.
> 4) To begin building trust between students, essential to a writing class where peer feedback is an important component of work.
>
> Students seemed to enjoy this activity. Afterward when I asked what they learned, they called out specific answers. When I asked what they realized about their classmates they said: They have good ideas; They live far

156

Table 4.22 Sample Interview Index Card, Side A

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD WRITING			
	Name	**PhoneNumber**	**Characteristic**
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Table 4.23 Sample Interview Index Card, Side B

WHY LEARNING TO WRITE IS SO IMPORTANT			
	Name	**Phone Number**	**Reason**
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

away; They are nice.

On Tuesday of the second week I handed out BCC policy statement on academic dishonesty. We discussed the policy and the consequences of cheating. Afterwards we reviewed what students had come up with when they were interviewed by classmates about the most important characteristic of writing. I put their answers on the blackboard and pointed out how close it was to the rubric I use to grade student papers. The only [criterion] they had missed was register. [Underlined in the original.] I discussed formality and register briefly.

Through the activity described above, the teacher clearly set the tone for the use of a collaborative approach. Just as important, the instructor began to teach the students techniques for becoming effective and successful students by actively participating in

157

their own intellectual and social development. These techniques included: establishing a network, relying on each other for knowledge, and building trust.

ii. Collaborative Learning Approaches

The instructor used a variety of collaborative learning approaches, including peer editing; pair, small, and large group discussions; interviews; and small group library research. How did the students feel about the collaborative learning approaches employed by the English 1 instructor? Below is a typical response to this question by one of the interviewees. When asked what she liked about the English 1 class, a student responded:

> ... [W]hat I liked was, we always got to sit in groups and talk together and she [the English 1 instructor] always asked us what we wanted to do. I mean, she led the class and everything but we put a lot of input into how the program went and I guess that's what helped a lot of us. And I think that's why a lot of [us] came back [enrolled in English 2 for Spring '99] the second one.

Several students also alluded to the teacher's request for input from the students regarding discussion topics, as well as the approaches to teaching and learning process.

Below is the teacher's description of a writing assignment followed by a peer editing activity:

Thursday, October 29, 1998,Week 9

For homework, students had to write their first draft of their literary paper. They were to analyze the story "Shooting an Elephant" or write a comparison of "Shooting an Elephant" and "My First Goose". They were to bring four copies to class for peer editing.

Tuesday, November 3, 98, Week 10

Student attendance was poor today. This was probably because an assignment was due. The flu is also going around.

We broke into small groups and did peer readings of the essays. The groups were to focus on the thesis statements and reasoning supporting the thesis statements. Classmates were to commend [Undetermined whether the teacher meant "comment" or "commend."] and give suggestions on how the thesis statements could be improved and how support for the thesis statements could be strengthened.

After students worked in groups, they spent a few minutes reflecting on the peer feedback and wrote a journal about how they would revise their paper. I collected the journal writing and the essay drafts.

As mentioned earlier, all 14 students that I interviewed who had taken an SSP English class unanimously indicated that they liked the collaborative activities that their English teacher implemented. They especially enjoyed, and felt that they had benefited from, peer editing. They felt that they benefited from having other students read their essays and give them feedback and ideas as to how to improve them. Generally speaking, students felt somewhat self-conscious the first time that they participated in peer editing, but once they overcame the self-consciousness, they actually enjoyed it. Below are the comments from one student who felt somewhat self-conscious when she

first participated in peer editing. She begins by responding to my question, "How did you feel about reading each other's essays?" Once again, I have changed the student's name to protect her privacy.

> Patti: It was cool because you get to see different styles and you go . . . well I was like, "Oh my God I hope mine is not bad." I didn't want anyone to read it. It wasn't that bad; it was really cool. They helped us like they'd be like, "How did you think of things like this?" And they'd go, "You look at this part." Or something like that. So it was good.
>
> Interviewer: It didn't make you [self-]conscious like - I don't want to show my [essay]...
>
> Patti: At the very first when she said that I was like, "No." I'd be like, "You go first." Because they'd read it to us so that we could see how they would have read it and then like it wasn't that bad. It was really good. You got ideas like how to approach the subject.

Creating a safe environment for students to engage in collaborative activities that required some sharing and self-disclosure eventually translated into self-confidence. Besides describing the peer editing process in detail, in the quote below a student describes how she gained confidence and self-assuredness to go up to another student and ask his or her opinion on something that she had done.

> [W]hen she, [the English 1 instructor] sat us down . . . for our first paper, we had to sit down with classmates in a group and we read our papers and we gave each other back helpful tips on what should be changed. And I think I like that because now I can go up to somebody and I say, you

> know, somebody I know in my classes and say, "How does this sound to you? And you tell me what you think I should do with it," because I was never able to do that. I can only, like, read it myself, read it again, and change the direction I thought were necessary. Like that, you get input from everybody else, but you might want to change your own paper and it could help you in the long run. So that, I think, that was also very helpful.

This self-confidence in writing extended into other classes as well. When asked whether the SSP English I class had helped students grow academically, one individual described how she went from having a belief that English was her worst subject to feeling more comfortable and not avoiding classes that require writing. She said:

> Oh, yeah, it has. I wasn't really... I was always scared of writing papers, essays or anything. But in that class it was explained really well, where I was able to be a lot more comfortable when I had to write papers for biology. And that helped me out a lot because that was my worst... I think English, to me, was my worst subject for that fact that I was so scared that I didn't know how to write papers or essays that you know I always thought, "Well, I'm going to stay away from classes where I have to write." So, but after that class I felt more comfortable with myself and now I know more that I can apply to papers that I have to write.

As I pointed out earlier, one of the reasons why students enjoyed participating in peer editing and other collaborative activities such as group discussions, was the fact that the teacher created a safe environment for students to share their thoughts both in writing and group or class discussions. Discussing topics that interested the students contributed to the high level of class participation in this class, which the teacher mentioned earlier.

In the following passage taken from the teacher's journal, she described the enthusiasm in the students' participation in a class discussion on the topic of "What is high school?"

> Thursday, October 1, 1998, Week 5
>
> A few students had read Theodore Sizer's essay "What is High School?" and mentioned the essay. Before long the class was in a heated discussion about what's wrong with high school. Everyone had something to say. Even though the discussion got off the original focus, I let the students speak their minds. I wish the class had been taped because there were so many insightful criticisms about teachers, school policies, standards, curricula. Ultimately, several of the students brought up the issue of privilege because some students were in elite schools, e.g., magnet schools, private schools, or schools in wealthy neighborhoods such as Pacific Palisades or San Marino. I would like to eventually get back to the issues of privilege and special programs. Maybe we can use this as a topic for the argument paper.

One of the writing assignments for the class was a reflective (autobiographical narrative) essay. Reading the essays that students wrote about themselves, which they shared with small groups at various points of the writing process, provide an indication of the safe environment that the teacher was able to create through the use of collaborative approaches. For example, one male student wrote about his poor family background when he was growing up in San Francisco. He described how he was able to overlook the family's poverty by playing with his hand-me-down toys and watching his hero, John Wayne, on movies shown on television. In spite of the difficult financial situation, and because of the power of his imagination, he described this period of his life as "exciting."

He concluded his essay by showing how profoundly John Wayne influenced him and inspired his writing.

Another student wrote what appeared to be a very painful reflective essay, which she had no difficulty sharing with her peer reading group. She wrote about her relationship with her father as she was growing up and described an embarrassing situation when she found out that her father had a drinking problem. She turned this hurtful memory into a learning experience. She concludes her essay by writing:

> Today it is many years later. I am now older and have read many books on alcoholism. My father still drinks but not as severely. I realized he will only stop when he truly wants to. It is always that way with alcoholics. Regardless of all this, I still love my daddy. I guess I had never really stopped. I find myself thinking back to the good old days now. The memories I had pushed out of my mind are coming back stronger than ever. The memories often bring a tear and a smile to my face. I will never forget them. [See Appendix H for full text of essay.]

After participating in the peer editing process, this student wrote a journal entry, a normal step in the writing process for this class, that described her peer comments about her essay and what she was planning to do to improve it for the re-write. She also made a statement about how painful it was to write her reflective essay. She wrote:

> Thursday, September 17, 1998, Week 3
>
> My group members thought my paper would be a better one if I explained things clearer and gave more supporting details on how my father had embarrassed me in public.

> For my second draft I will elaborate more and give more detailed examples of my story. I will try and make the second draft a bit longer and express my feelings better. Writing a reflecti[ve] paper is not as easy as it sounds though and it sure brings back a lot of memories.

The qualitative data clearly supports the fact that students in this class felt safe disclosing very personal and sometimes painful information to their classmates in the learning process. It is also clear that the students enjoyed the class, as supported by their enthusiastic class participation. Given the teacher's extensive use of collaborative activities and the high rate of student success in this class, 95% earned a grade of C or better or received credit, there is no doubt that the collaborative approaches employed by the instructor played a key role in the high level of student satisfaction and success.

One of the most salient characteristics of the English 1 instructor, besides her willingness to teach a class using collaborative approaches almost exclusively, was the level of care she had for the students. All of her students that I interviewed indicated that they liked her as a teacher, that they learned much from her, and that they missed her. In addition to being available to students in class, after class and during her office hours, she dedicated much time to grade and make comments on the students' essays. Students sensed her caring attitude and appreciated it. I have a sense that the caring and appreciation was mutual.

Besides caring, some interviewees expressed that they appreciate and prefer a teacher who is passionate or at least enthusiastic about his or her field of expertise and shares that excitement with the students. A student who confessed to changing her preference of sitting location, admitted that she now prefers to sit in the front. She said:

> [I] like [it] because you can actually see the teacher, it's not like some person just up there talking . . . For me I tend to look at the teachers and I see how concerned they are about what they're teaching about. And like I kind of get more interested when I see that they're so passionate about the subject. It's like, "Wow." And like I learn more as opposed to teachers who are just kind of like there to do their job and then... So I can even see their facial expressions, I guess, and the board so you write down notes a lot clearer.

Judging from these comments, the SSP English 1 instructor fits this student's image of the kind of teacher who can motivate and excite students about the subject matter through his or her own passion.

During a post-interview discussion with one of the students, we discussed the purpose of the Student Success Project and the factors that contribute to student success, particularly the role of instructional faculty in student success. The student volunteered the following comment:

> **Well, most of it depends on the professor because if the professor seems interesting and is enthusiastic about teaching the class, then obviously the student is going to stay in the class and want to learn. And the professor has to feel like they're connecting with the students** and not just lecture and then get out and then come back the next day

– lecture then leave. You know, they have to talk to the students and get them involved as well. So I think a major part in the college classes is the professor, because they're... I had a couple of friends who took a psychology class and they were enjoying it, they were doing well in it, but me, on the other hand, I didn't do well because my professor, she didn't teach... I mean, that's my opinion, you know, I didn't learn much from her and I didn't do well. So that kind of made me view that subject differently. [Emphasis added.]

Evidently, in addition to the positive effect that employing collaborative approaches had on students, the instructor's personality and his or her approach to the subject matter can influence how a student feels about the subject and the class.

In the excerpt below from the teacher's journal she explained the peer editing and her essay grading process.

Tuesday, September 29, 1998, Week 5

This is the third formal draft. Although I have seen earlier drafts, I gave very little feedback so far. The first two drafts were read by peers, first for content and organization and second for language: grammar, mechanics, word choice. I read through each paper once for content and a second time with a green pen to mark grammar and mechanics. After I had finished reading the whole class set, I wrote a set of comments to each student based on the whole process from start to finish. The comments were focused on three areas: content considerations, linguistic considerations, and rhetorical consideration. This was a time-consuming process. I average 45 minutes per paper from start to finish. When I saw students today I apologized for not having their papers finished yet. They were fine with that.

166

As the English 1 instructor explained in the excerpt above, she wrote comments on content, linguistic, rhetoric, and other considerations. Following are the instructor's notes to the student who wrote the essay about her father's drinking problem:

Content Consideration

This must be a painful topic to reflect on. Your comments show that you have thought deeply about the experience. The second paragraph is filled with details that help the reader see the beauty of your relationship with your father: the coloring books and crayons... You could add even more here. What kind of candy? By being as specific as possible you help your reader visualize what you see in your memory. In the third paragraph you actually avoid describing what your father was like when he was drunk except to say that he couldn't even stand up. It may be painful, but you should try to paint a clearer image for your audience. Remember, we haven't seen what you have seen, and you need to make us picture it from your words.

Linguistic Considerations:

You have a few mechanical errors throughout the paper. You probably just needed to proofread one or two more times. See if you understand what I have marked, and see me if you have any questions. Grammatically it looks pretty good, but you have a few pronoun errors. Again, see me if you need to discuss these.

Rhetorical Considerations:

Your paper doesn't focus so much on one incident; it is more like a narrative of your life with your father. I was wondering if it might be more effective to just concentrate on one outstanding incident, which you might describe in far more detail with dialogue. For instance, you could focus the paper on the time when [your friend] witnessed your father drunk. This incident appears to be a turning point, yet your essay doesn't

build to that point. It just seems like one more incident in a series. If this is the point that you meant to focus on, you need to add much more to the scene, more dialogue, more imagery, more feelings.

Other Considerations:

Good use of the word processor. Don't forget to double space it. If you are using Word, go to Format, drag the mouse down to Paragraph. Click on the Spacing tab and find Line Spacing. There you can type 21i. It took me forever to figure that out. For this comment sheet I prefer 1.5, but for formal papers you should double space.

Please remember that you may rework this essay if you want. I look forward to reading your next essay.

Reading these and other comments, I had the feeling that the teacher treated students with respect and compassion, thus earning their respect.

iii. Effects of Collaborative Learning Approaches

In reviewing the instructor's journal, I sensed that by Thursday of the second week of the semester, she had successfully established a safe environment for active participation. She commented:

Thursday, September 10, 1998, Week 2

What impresses me most about this class is the active involvement and enthusiasm they show. In many English 1 classes I have two or three people dominating the discussion. In others I have to ask questions to specific people for people to volunteer and participate. Just about everyone had something to say about the reading or asked relevant questions which other classmates answered.

In the last ten minutes of class I asked students to read the invention strategies in *Writing Worth Reading*, WWR, (brainstorming, outlining, clustering, etc.) and to begin thinking about a significant event in their lives to write about for the first essay. They were to do an invention exercise and bring it to class.

During the third week, in a moment of weakness, the teacher felt tempted, but resisted regressing to a teacher-centered or lecture-centered approach, but even had she wavered, the students would not have let her. She realized that her role had changed. She had ceased being a "transmitter of knowledge" to become an "expert designer of intellectual experiences for students" (Ibid., p. 10). Leigh Smith and MacGregor describe a collaborative classroom as an "interdependent community," where the high level of student and teacher involvement "questions and reshapes assumed power relationships between teachers and students, a process that at first can be confusing and disorienting." In the following passage the teacher clearly depicts the process of reshaping assumed power relationships:

Tuesday, September 15, 1998, Week 3

Students came to class with their invention exercises. They got into groups of four to orally share the stories that they planned to write about. If they weren't yet sure what story they wanted to write about, they shared a few stories, and classmates indicated which seemed better for this particular assignment.

Then I really wanted students to get information about language issues: clarifying, specifying, imagery, etc., but I didn't want to

lecture. [Emphasis added.] I also did not want the students to have to do lots of reading because for their homework I wanted them to write the first draft of their essay. So, I wrote the topics I wanted them to know on the board: 1) diction; 2) connotation and denotation; 3) using a dictionary & thesaurus; 4) specific and general; 5) qualifiers; 6) jargon; 7) clichés; 8) sexist language; 9) style; 10) tone; 11) imagery; 12) figurative language; 13) register/ informal vs. formal. Then, in groups of four they divided up the concepts, read the parts of WWR chapters 11 & 12 which included these points, and then shared them with others in the group.

After they had divided up the tasks, and they were working quietly for a time, taking notes on their sections, I began to feel that I was letting go. I thought that maybe we should go over the concepts as a class because I wanted to be sure that everyone understood the relevance of these concepts to good writing. So I asked them if they wanted to go over them as a class. They said, no, they preferred to go over them in the small groups. I felt like I wasn't really "teaching," just providing the structure for students to get it for themselves. [Emphasis added.] The interesting thing is that they got through the material and shared it in 45 minutes. If they had had to do it for homework, it would probably have taken much longer. **If I had lectured about the ideas, on a good day I could get through it in 45 minutes, but many would have been asleep after seven minutes.** [Emphasis added.] I try to inject lots of humor or relevant examples into my lectures, and I think an occasional lecture now and then is OK, but **I want to keep working to show students effective ways to be active learners. Besides, many of these concepts they probably already knew about. Having to teach them to one another probably helped reinforce them much more.** [Emphasis added.]

b. English 21A

As indicated earlier, English 21A is part of a one-year sequence and a prerequisite for English 1, therefore, it is considered a basic level class, as opposed to English 1,

which is college level. Also, I would like to remind the reader about some of the quantitative data pertaining to the English 21A students. Specifically, that the mean GPA for SSP English 21A students was 2.39, less than for the SSP English 1 students, which was 2.66. Also, 68% of all SSP students who enrolled in English 21A were successful, compared to the 74% success rate for all SSP students who enrolled in English 1. I review these data prior to analyzing the qualitative data as a backdrop to what transpired in class, what the teacher said in her journal, in the focus group, and what the students said during the in-depth interviews.

Unlike her English 1 counterpart, the SSP English 21A instructor was not a tenure track teacher. Instead, she was a part-time faculty member, and as such, she did not normally have office hours, but because she was being paid a stipend to teach a class in a special program for the first time, she did have office hours for this particular class.

As was the case with the English 1 teacher, the English 21A instructor committed to using collaborative approaches. Throughout her journal she indicated employing several collaborative techniques including dyads, small group and class discussions, role playing, and peer editing.

Although I did not confirm this, I sensed that the English 21A teacher's experience with collaborative approaches was less extensive than that of the English 1

instructor. However, other factors may have contributed to the lower rate of student success in this class compared to the English 1 class, as well as to the apparent lack of interest on the part of the students to participate in collaborative learning activities or in any activities, for that matter. It appears that one of those factors was a lesser academic preparation among English 21A students as indicated by their lower English placement through the college assessment test. In reading the passages from the various sources, the reader will note not only the students' lack of academic preparation, but also a lack of interest, and perhaps even a lack of desire to learn. This is not surprising, since it is human nature to avoid that in which one has not experienced success. A certain level of apathy and a lack of motivation are apparent from the beginning. The following excerpt is from the teacher's journal. She wrote:

> Thursday, Sept. 10, Week 2:
>
> Second week and students still have not been able to purchase the book of *Short Stories*. I made copies for the students, since I announced a quiz for Thursday on the story, but not every student made an extra effort to get a copy. And then **one-third of the students failed the quiz** [Emphasis added.]; (predictably), blamed the bookstore, but did not do anything about it (disappointing, since there were various ways for them to attain a copy. It would not have been impossible, but the desire was not there). I sense already **a lack of enthusiasm from certain students and that worries me. I need to change gears at this point and maybe try some other things.** [Emphasis added.]

> I've introduced them to the five-paragraph essay writing and I have mostly all the girls attention, but **the boys are bored. What to do?** [Emphasis added.]

The teacher's frustration mounted as she searched desperately for new approaches that might enable her to reach these students. They represented a challenge for her.

The teacher reported that one third of the class failed a test or quiz on other occasions. On Thursday, September 24, she wrote:

> Thursday's class we mainly went over homework and much needed discussions of subject-verb agreement, etc. I paired them up to correct their own homework; they had to check with me if they were not sure, etc. Finally we had a quiz (had been announced) on subject-verb agreement. **One-third of [the] class failed....** [Emphasis added.]

It is not difficult to sense the frustration, on the part of the instructor, not only about the students' poor prior academic preparation, but also about their slow grasp of the concepts she taught.

In the following citation from her journal, as she continued to search for creative approaches, the instructor expressed her conviction that this particular class should have been tutor-based. In other words, these students would have benefited from having a tutor assigned to attend class sessions and be available outside of class to help the students individually. She said,

> Thursday, Oct. 1, 1998, Week 5

> For several class periods now we had been working on developing a paragraph. They had turned in a *rewritten* and *revised* version last Thursday, (9/24) and I had a chance to look at their work over the weekend. I was quite overcome by the amount of work yet to be done and decided to meet with them individually on Thursday. They had made appointments with me (basically all day availability). I wanted to talk to each student and point out individual problems. They all came, dutifully, and I sense with some that they appreciated the attention. (It makes me think that **this class should be largely tutor-based. How about integrating one-on-one conferences once a week, later in the semester?** [Emphasis added.] I wonder if that would bring better results. I'm thinking of this because I was quite taken by the problems I had found in their paragraphs. And this after weeks and weeks of talking about writing and practicing writing.)

In retrospect, implementing a tutor-based approach would have paralleled what other special programs at BCC already had in place. Since implementing such an idea was out of the question at this point in the semester, the teacher decided to hold individual conferences with students. This to me was an indication of her dedication to student success.

The lack of interest, which I alluded to earlier, at times appeared to reflect the students' general sense of apathy. This feeling was evident in the students' constant tardiness, regular absenteeism, and incessant disregard for the teacher's directives. Student apathy persisted even though the instructor attempted a variety of techniques. This chronic apathy, coupled with the teacher's apparent high expectations, contributed greatly to a similarly high level of frustration on her part. In the following passage the

teacher's constant quest for innovation is apparent, however, without much success, particularly in the first half of the semester.

Thursday, September 17, 1998, Week 3

For Thursday I had prepared something we hadn't done yet and which normally works very well in my English 2 class. They had occasion to re-read... "Marigolds" by Eugenia Collier, a writer I deeply respect and a short story, I thought, that would appeal to my mostly Black student body. I set them in groups of four; I had a few questions prepared for them and they were supposed to discuss these questions in their respective groups (to promote informal peer discussion; on a more social level, to get to know each other better, and to promote group awareness). The questions were not only pertaining to the text, but also geared toward personal exploration (questions: Does the protagonist remind you of your own childhood? Can you remember an event that marked the end of your childhood and the beginning of your adulthood? This was then turned into a writing project). Each person in the group had a function. But after a few minutes only, some groups were already finished **([two male students] were flirting openly with one of the students)** [Emphasis added.] and even though I talked with each group and suggested to go beyond obvious responses, they did not care (literally). I was also trying to draw them into a more generative dialogue. The protagonist in this story is poor, black, destroys patches of marigolds; What makes *us* aggressive, that we have the urge to destroy (for no apparent reasons). What are we angry at? Why are crimes so pervasive in economically poor neighborhoods? (The author mentions to be in a 'cage.' What does that mean? Etc.) **Nevertheless, the exercise turned out disappointing to me. Did I expect too much of them?** [Emphasis added.] (very few students are readers and I assume that most of my students simply do not know how to approach a text). I was hurt and angry (of course, I did not show it). It was close to the end of the class and I did not ask them how they would have liked to improve this exercise (I can hear already Maurice's [Not his real name.] answer: "Don't do any reading."). **I felt I did everything I could, without getting much effort back from them**

[Emphasis added.] (I have to interject that this exercise went very well in my afternoon class. We actually came up with some very interesting conclusions regarding the story AND social conditions for Blacks in the U.S.). **I want them to have fun in my class, but they can not just sit there and expect to be entertained.** [Emphasis added.]

The teacher's frustration did not last the entire semester, however. Her efforts began to pay some dividends about the middle of the semester when she began to experience an increase in student interest in the form of unprecedented student participation, at least for this particular class. On October 1 she reported that students showed interest in a short story titled "Rules of the Game" by asking questions during the class discussion. The following week, October 8, she indicated that some of the students' paragraphs had had improved and that some of the students had gone to seek tutoring, which she had suggested. And finally, on October 29 she reported experiencing some energy coming from the class as a result of small group discussions. She wrote:

Thursday, October 29, 1998, Week 9

A good week—or maybe we are by now just very used to each other... But **Tuesday's short story discussion went very well.** [Emphasis added.] This time I gave them some questions regarding E.A. Poe's short story ("The Cask of Amontillado"). It looked like a quiz. I made them answer the questions by themselves and only some minutes later did I point out, that, by the way, this was not a quiz! **Later, I put them in groups of three to discuss the various questions and... the story among them. And they did! I also did not make them report their group discussion's result back to the class (something I sensed they hated to do in the past).** [Emphasis added.] I pretty much followed one

173

of Shor's suggestion[s]: have them work individually, then set them in groups, without them having to report their findings back to the class. **They wanted to know about the protagonist's motivations, about the place, about why and what and how. It was wonderful: we spent the whole class time on the story (fine with me), although I had planned two more activities (editing and grammar). But everyone seemed to leave the class smiling and energized.** [Emphasis added.]

The quotation reflects the transformation that was taking place not only with students, but also with the teacher. She was beginning to show some flexibility and adaptability to the situation caused by the students' irresponsible and unresponsive attitude. The students in turn were also adapting to the teacher since their efforts to derail the teacher's lesson plans through irresponsible behavior were no longer working.

The following passage from the instructor's journal supports the assertion that she was becoming more flexible and was beginning to demonstrate more creativity in dealing with the students' irresponsible behavior.

Thursday, November 24, 1998, Week 13

A first draft of their out-of-class essay was due today. The students had their drafts ready, but had not made the copies for distribution among the groups. Ok, what to do now? My whole plan of group activities and peer editing had become oblivious. Of course I was angry and I needed to come up with something different for them to do. So, instead of working in groups I paired them up. I explained to them how important it was to revise. A good writer needed to know how to revise as well; I needed to enforce that and showed them how to revise (this took a long time, since I didn't have any handout prepared, since I had to 'ad-lib.') I have found previously that they liked 'role-play[ing]'

> and liked to 'play' the teacher and writing suggestions and comments on the essays. Let's see how successful this will be.

Clearly, another obstacle in achieving student success for this class was what appeared to be a low level of maturity. During a focus group, the teacher admitted that she had to act as a "disciplinarian" in class and that she resented it. She went on to describe her disciplinarian routine in this manner:

> I would come in, would start doing our activities and I would say -- "Don't do this, don't do that." I had two trouble students, you see, that actually tried to . . . There were a few instances, I think I wrote it in my journal about it that tested me. I was very aware of that and so I said -- "don't do this, don't do that, shh now quiet this person is talking" -- and it was very difficult.

The immaturity on the part of the students seemed to be exacerbated by the physical environment of the class and the classroom surroundings. The class met in a room adjacent to the lobby of the college library. This room had served previously as an art gallery; three walls are painted bright white and the fourth one faces the lobby and is made of clear glass. In addition, the teacher complained that the walls were rather thin and that while she conducted class she could hear voices and other sounds coming from the library. The teacher agreed that this environment was not conducive to learning. Although the students that I interviewed who were enrolled in English 21A denied being conscious of the people passing through the lobby, both the counselor and I made

separate presentations to the class and agreed that it the environment was intimidating at worst and distracting at best. Below are some of the comments made at the focus group about the environment:

Teacher: They were at the library, people walking around. It was so distracting and they saw friends and they'd go like this [waving her arm] and I'd say – "Excuse me, we're in a class, you know. You can talk to them later."

John: I wonder if they [the students] felt like they were in a fishbowl being in that room where it's got nothing but windows and people are passing by and they can see what they're doing... Maybe that was intimidating and... threatening?

Counselor: I had that sense when I came to your class, too. Sometimes when I would come it was like, "Oh, this is a very strange place and it feels strange... Even to stand and talk it felt strange to me.

It is interesting to note, however, that students who were enrolled in SSP English 21A and who participated in interviews did not see the physical environment of the classroom as an impediment to participation and learning.

173

Chapter 5

Discussion

I. Summary

Community colleges represent the democratization of higher education. Their popularity has increased considerably throughout the 20th Century, particularly after World War II, especially among non-traditional students beginning in the 1960s. The "open door" policy of the community colleges, while allowing for student mobility between community colleges and between the various systems of higher education, has made it difficult to conduct persistence and student success studies for community college students. The multi-purpose mission of this segment of higher education has contributed to the elusiveness of the success measures. As a result of the open access philosophy and the multi-purpose mission of community colleges students arrive with a variety of levels of academic preparation, learning styles, goals, and levels of commitment to both their goals and to the institution. In 1960 Burton Clark reviewed what he termed the "cooling out" function of community colleges that was caused by the unrealistic expectations of a large portion of students. In the last few decades as these institutions have attempted to define their functions, the transfer rate has served as a measure of success. With the increase in non-traditional student participation,

particularly among ethnic minorities, community colleges modes of measuring success have come under greater scrutiny and more guidelines have been imposed upon them to ensure that **ALL** students have an equal opportunity to succeed. As a result of these measures and individual campus initiatives to increase the transfer rate of ethnic minorities and non-traditional students, I feel that the **"warming up" function** plays a more critical role. The efforts to increase student persistence and success at community colleges have multiplied as a result of programs such as the Freshman Year Experience and various versions of the freshman seminar.

The present study answered the research questions by implementing some strategies based on Tinto's model of social and academic integration, Astin's theory of student involvement, and the rationale for employing collaborative approaches in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the interventions reduce the probationary rate of community college students, particularly in their first year, and increase the rate of persistence from their first to second semester. This project was known at Bay Community College as the Student Success Project. The interventions emphasized collaborative approaches both at orientation and in specially designed English classes taught by teachers who de-emphasized the teacher-centered or lecture-centered method in favor of collaborative learning techniques. Additionally, the project offered participants a number of out-of-class activities to increase the opportunities for

student involvement, as well as social and academic integration, in an attempt to enhance student persistence and success. Finally, the project provided students with academic counseling, inspirational speakers, and mentoring opportunities.

In determining the level of effectiveness of the various interventions I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.

II. Questions for Future Research

Although this study answered three very distinct questions that involved a review of idiosyncratic factors that prevent community college students from succeeding, an evaluation of some collaborative approaches used in English classes, and a consideration of participatory techniques employed in orientation, some very general questions remain. Even though some of these questions can be researched globally, because they require collaboration between different segments of the campus, their answers remain to be determined on a campus-by-campus basis. This determination takes into consideration the political climate, the level of commitment to student success, as well as the quality of leadership skills. Because of the global nature of these future questions, I hope that the various constituencies see them as an invitation to collaborate with each other and to put away territoriality and elitism to improve student success.

- What is the role of faculty in promoting student success?

- How can senior administrators support professional development at community colleges to enhance teacher education on their own campuses?
- Since community colleges already promote themselves as teaching institutions, how can they incorporate evaluation into their programs to promote excellence in teaching?
- How can community college students achieve social and academic integration?
- How can community colleges help students to achieve social and academic integration?
- How does social and academic integration contribute to student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence among community college students?
- How can academic and student affairs work collaboratively on an equal level to enhance student success?
- How can community colleges promote and adopt the attitude that student success is everyone's responsibility?

III. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

A. The Site

Because the study took place at BCC, where I am currently employed, the possibility of bias existed. However, working at BCC also presented a number of distinct advantages. Being knowledgeable about the culture of BCC, having established contacts

at various levels of the organizational structure, and enjoying the respect and trust of faculty, managers and students were but a few of the advantages. Being intimately familiar with the institution, I was also aware of the nuances of any recommendations generated from this study.

B. Length of the Study

SSP was a one-semester study. Is it possible that some of the interventions implemented take longer to show a more lasting, statistically significant difference in achievement and/or behavior? I strongly believe that a longitudinal study would help determine whether the interventions implemented in this study had a more lasting, statistically significant effect. Given that academic and personal development are on-going processes, it may take more than one semester for students to process and master the academic and social skills that they learned beginning at orientation and ending with their final examinations in the fall semester. Reinforcement is key to learning a new behavior.

C. Study and Control Sample Size

A size disparity exists between the study and control group. The study group was relatively small compared to the control group. Another limitation within the sample size category was the implementation and evaluation of several interventions. In attempting to determine the effectiveness of the interventions, the sample size for each of the

subgroups became a factor in conducting the data analysis, particularly in determining statistical significance.

D. Data

I did not interview non-persisters. Interviewing non-persisters may have enabled the researcher to collect invaluable data on factors that contribute to student departure. These additional data may have assisted the researcher in differentiating between individual and institutional barriers. This distinction may hold the key in the implementation of effective student support programs.

Also, the in-depth interview sample was skewed in favor of female Hispanic students, who represented 47% of the sample. Female students in general outnumbered males in the in-depth interview sample by a margin larger than 2:1. Black females did not participate in the interview process, nor did White males.

Students classified as "unmotivated" were not interviewed. Unmotivated students were those who exhibited one of the following behaviors: they were originally selected at random for the study and did not attend any orientation, did not enroll for Fall '98, or chose to switch from the SSP to the regular orientation. Interviews with these students might have shed some light as to their

- level of involvement
- institutional commitment

- sense of connectedness with faculty, and other students, and
- level of satisfaction with orientation and other services

or lack thereof.

E. Orientation Process

Because three different counselors conducted orientation and each had his or her own personality and approach, the potential for inconsistency in the implementation of the script was very real. If the number of students per orientation session who opted not to participate in the Student Success Project is any indication of the difference in the counselors' style, I am inclined to believe that each counselor may have affected the students' perception of the program and possibly influenced their decision to participate or not. The degree of each counselor's effect on the participants is undetermined. In my observations of the counselors who facilitated the SSP orientation, I noticed that two of the three were comfortable with the new format, which emphasized student participation. However, the third counselor appeared to be almost uncomfortable with the collaborative approaches and reverted at times to a teacher-centered method. Also, more students who were originally assigned to this counselor's orientation sessions appeared to opt to attend the regular orientation. The apparently inconsistent levels of counselor support and effectiveness may reflect a lack of counselor screening and the limited counselor training

that took place prior to the orientation. Therefore, I consider these two factors limitations of the study.

A second limitation in the orientation process had to do with timing. As indicated earlier, for logistical purposes the SSP orientation sessions took place on BCC's "Weekend of Welcome" along with, but separate from, the regular orientation. Each session was scheduled to last three-and-a-half hours, which most did. However, the afternoon session of Saturday, August 1, was cut short by approximately 45 minutes. A manager overseeing the Admissions and Records (A&R) Office informed the SSP staff at 2:30 p.m. on the afternoon of August 1 that for contractual reasons, the A&R staff had to leave at 4:00 p.m.; therefore, the SSP orientation staff had to dismiss the students at 3:30 p.m. The net effect of this last-minute change was that for approximately one-fourth of the students in the study group, the orientation was 2 1/2 hours in duration and 3 1/2 for the remaining three-fourths of the group. The SSP staff was totally unaware, and therefore unprepared for this critical time constraint. Because of the lateness of the notice, the staff had to adjust the presentation to comply with the request. Consequently, the staff eliminated some items from the agenda. Some eliminated the video presentation, others could not discuss the case studies as thoroughly as they had in the previous sessions. This timing limitation may have affected the outcome measures of one-fourth of the SSP students.

F. Teaching Strategies

Two different instructors, one full-time, tenure track teacher and one part-time teacher, taught the two SSP English classes in Fall '98. This arrangement had the potential for inconsistency in the implementation of pedagogy, particularly collaborative approaches, thus affecting the outcome of the intervention. The difference in employment status, as well as previous exposure to collaborative approaches, could conceivably determine: the effectiveness of the instructor, the time available for office hours, the amount of follow-up, and contact with the counselor. Also, the teacher's personality could potentially affect the level of connectedness that students felt with the instructor, the program, and the institution. All of these variables could conceivably affect the outcome measures.

Given the unusually high persistence rate of students who enrolled in the SSP English classes, conducting studies to determine whether a cause and effect relationship exists between collaborative learning approaches and persistence rates would be highly advisable.

G. Academic Counseling

Although in academic year 1998-99 the SSP counselor worked a total of 18 hours per week at BCC, only 10 hours per week were dedicated to counseling SSP students. Ten hours per week for counseling were not enough for a group this size as evidenced by the

relatively low percentage of SSP students who met with the counselor in Fall '98 and Winter '99. Although the staff made an effort to contact every SSP student to encourage him or her to make an appointment with the counselor, only some students were contacted in the fall semester, others were contacted in Spring '99. The staff decided, in the interest of thoroughness, to call students in alphabetical order. As a result of the limited counseling time, and because some students made more than one appointment with the counselor on their own, the staff was able to contact students whose last names began with the letters from A to S in Fall '98. The staff called students whose last names began with the letter T to Z at the beginning of Spring '99. Had we been able to contact every student during the fall semester, the probationary rates may have been lower.

Counseling appointments were half-an-hour long at the beginning; later they were increased to one hour. Although the intent of the time extension was to allow the counselor and the students to build a relationship, it further limited the number of students who could meet with the SSP counselor during the fall semester.

A second limitation is related to the counseling component in relation to the orientation. In the process of conducting in-depth interviews with SSP students, some pointed to a disconnect in making the connection between students and the SSP counselor. Mainly, that SSP students did not have the opportunity to meet the SSP counselor at orientation. In fact, one student indicated that she was always under the

impression that the counselor who conducted the orientation in her session would be her assigned counselor, which was not the case. She suggested that for the following year the students have the opportunity to meet the SSP counselor at orientation to facilitate the connection between the two. In another case, a student who was unaware of the availability of counseling through SSP, took the initiative to go to the Transfer/Counseling Center for counseling. She reported having mixed results. She was satisfied with the results in one visit but dissatisfied in another. When I informed her of the SSP counselor during the in-depth interview, she indicated that she would make an appointment with her.

H. Activities

Although the statistically significant difference in mean GPA between students who attended two or more out-of-class activities and those who did not is not surprising, future research may focus on replicating this finding. Furthermore, similar research may establish whether there is a cause and effect relationship and the strength of the relation between student participation and high achievement. Future research on this subject may explore the possibility that intervening variables may be at play. The findings in this study in the area of student participation support the theories of researchers such as Astin (1993), Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), and Tinto (1993).

IV. Recommendations

A. Local Recommendations

Through the Student Success Project I studied a number of interventions with the help of instructional and counseling faculty, classified employees, students and managers at Bay Community College. A few helped grudgingly; however, most collaborated enthusiastically and with a great deal of anticipation. Given the complexity of the study, the time and resources invested in the planning and implementation, as well as the collaboration needed to make the study a reality, it is evident that the college community at BCC values student success, retention, and persistence.

Since community colleges have, as one of their missions, to educate the masses, given the current political climate that favors outcome measures and performance-based funding, it is critical, more than ever, to implement programs that are cost effective. For these reasons and taking into consideration the results of the present study, I make the following recommendation with due respect to the administration at Bay Community College.

Recommendation Number 1 – Promote collaboration between academic and student affairs personnel.

Based on the observations and results of the present study, all areas of the campus need to work in concert to ensure student success. Student success is the responsibility of students, managers, classified staff, instructional faculty, and student services personnel.

In the case of BCC faculty and student support services personnel work in isolation in promoting student success. The disconnect between the two is mostly due to lack of opportunities to collaborate, and territoriality that is grounded in job security and concerns about quality of information.

The opportunities for these two critical segments of the college to collaborate are few. They work side by side on college-wide committees and sit in the same section at graduation. That is the extent of their collaboration. Communication between the academic departments and counseling is virtually non-existent, except for information concerning major requirements and articulation agreements. Establishing a viable liaison system between academic departments and counseling could open channels of communication between the two areas, increase mutual professional respect for one another, and augment the opportunities for collaboration. Two prime opportunities for collaboration are new student orientation and the retention committee. Instructional faculty are only peripherally involved in new student orientation. Their involvement is limited to staffing an information booth during the Weekend of Welcome, which is when the majority of new students participate in orientation. Inviting instructional faculty to participate on an equal level and side by side in the orientation process, could

- enhance understanding and respect between academic and student affairs
- enhance the credibility of orientation

- educate instructors as to the needs of first-time college students
- enable faculty to contribute to the acculturation process of new students
- provide a means for instructors to communicate helpful tips for student success and career options in various fields
- enable students to connect with faculty, thus increasing the opportunities for social and academic integration
- enhance student success

Recommendation Number 2 – Institutionalize the Retention Committee.

The retention committee is primarily an ad hoc committee of the Counseling Department: only one adjunct instructor participates regularly in meetings, the rest of the members are counselors, student services coordinators and managers. Unless the membership of this committee is open to a campus-wide constituency, and it is recognized by the Academic Senate as a joint committee, the potential for institutionalizing student retention efforts is non-existent. Primary stakeholders of student retention such as the academic senate, department chairs, and the faculty association (the teachers' union) need to take ownership of their role in promoting student success. For example, the faculty, under the leadership of the academic senate and department chairs, could determine their role in student success.

The planning and implementation of this program represent a model of campus-wide collaboration, particularly between counseling and instructional faculty. Table 5.1 shows the total number of BCC employees by classification who collaborated at various

Table 5.1 Student Success Project Collaborators

Classification	No.
Certificated Managers	6
Classified Personnel	4
Counseling Faculty	17
Information Management Staff	1
Instructional Faculty	25
Student Services Personnel	1
Students	15
Total	**68**

points of the planning, training, implementation, data collection, and data analysis of this project. The instructional faculty involved included department chairs, academic senators, and representatives from the faculty association.

These data show not only the institutional commitment to this project, but more importantly, they demonstrate that counseling and instructional faculty can work together to enhance student success. Both counselors and instructors commented at planning and debriefing meetings that collaborating in this project was a positive experience, one that showed them how they can support one another and how important orientation is for new students and the institution. At the orientation debriefing meeting one of the counselors made the following comment in regards to the collaboration aspect:

> I'm so grateful... This is the first time I've done orientation and an instructor is with me... I liked it because... number one, it gives us an opportunity to see what we do. It's one thing to say it over lunch or whatever in passing, but for someone from another department to actually be in the room with us to help us do this... and also by her [the instructor] helping with the forms and talking about her department. I mean it just helps us in a great way, really. I would love to see that continue. It was so good.

Instructors also acknowledged the benefits of collaborating with counseling in the orientation process. Faculty saw this as an opportunity for them to connect with students and vise versa. At the counselor/faculty debriefing meeting the following dialogue took place between an instructor and the SSP counselor respectively:

Instructor:	I thought **being involved with the orientation was so good for me.** [Emphasis added] It was so good for me to know... how much the students need to know and how little can be accomplished in that short period of time. It is so important.
Counselor:	And how much they [the students] don't know.
Instructor:	Yeah! That's right!
Counselor:	...it's great having instructional faculty involved in orientation. It's so useful to the students because then they believe it's important. And they pay attention more and then it's their connection with a faculty member – "Oh, this is a person. And they're not 80 years old, and they're not really weird, and they can speak – Oh, I want to take a class with that person." Even one person makes such a difference.
Instructor:	Oh, yeah, that connection, that connection that I had even with two or three. On the first day of class

they sort of winked and smiled at me, or you know, I'd say – "Oh, there's a familiar face." And it worked.

Counselor: Uh huh. It's more connections.

Instructors attended the planning meetings in equal or greater numbers than counselors. Faculty expressed their appreciation for having an opportunity to participate in the discussions about research on student retention and persistence, and to state their opinions on what makes a student successful and how to implement the various interventions. They found the discussions not only intellectually stimulating, but also professionally satisfying. They recognized their limitations in the area of student support services; nevertheless they wanted to make a contribution to what they perceived to be serious institutional challenges—student departure and high probationary rates.

Recommendation Number 3 – Make effective teaching an institutional priority by actively promoting professional development to assist faculty in acquiring effective teaching skills.

Community colleges pride themselves in providing some of the best teaching in higher education. Teachers must use their ingenuity to create learning opportunities for students outside of the classroom to reinforce the learning that takes place in the classroom and vise versa. Not all teachers can do this, however, without the proper training. Professional development plays a key role in enhancing teachers' exposure to

effective pedagogy and learning approaches. Unfortunately, moneys available for professional development at BCC, as in most community colleges, do not begin to address the need for training on pedagogy and classroom management. At BCC, for example, approximately $94,000 was earmarked for professional development in 1999-2000, including professional conference attendance for faculty, staff, and administrators. That translates to about $70 per employee. Not only are these moneys inadequate to address the professional needs of community college employees, particularly faculty, but the bureaucratic obstacles that applicants must overcome discourage them from tapping into these resources.

Another obstacle that must be overcome is the fact that much professional development takes place at conferences, thus making it prohibitive for an institution to provide opportunities for growth to a large number of faculty. Bringing the professional experts on campus on a consultant basis could make professional development feasible and cost effective.

Recommendation Number 4 – Promote social and academic integration by providing faculty development in pedagogies that promote student participatory activities and out-of-class involvement.

A higher percentage of today's college students are working and more of them are working longer hours; therefore, they spend less time on campus than their counterparts

did ten or twenty years ago. Since community college students spend most of their on-campus time in classes, it is there that faculty must promote student involvement and social and academic integration. They can be strengthened through out-of-class activities that are somehow connected to academics and the classroom. Students must learn the skills (social and otherwise) that promote collaborative learning both in and out of the classroom, for what happens outside the classroom is just as important as what happens in the classroom. Therefore, every out-of-class assignment must be viewed as a learning opportunity, as well as an opportunity for students to connect with one another and with the subject matter. Some of these connections may happen via electronic communication, which has the potential of strengthening writing skills. The more that out-of-class activities are connected to academics and what is going on in the classroom, the more those activities will contribute to the students' personal, academic and cognitive development. Participation in the students' own development is likely to positively affect the students' self-esteem and goal and institutional commitment.

In regards to electronic communication, institutions must be cognizant of issues surrounding accessibility. Given the socioeconomic status of community college students, a relatively high percentage of them may not have access to electronic communication. If this is the case, the institution should provide such access through its own infrastructure.

Recommendation Number 5 – Change the institution's paradigm "from students have a right to fail" to "students have a right to succeed."

As community colleges continue to educate an increasing number of non-traditional students with non-traditional learning styles, faculty must adopt teaching styles best suited to help these students. Instructors must accept that even though these may not be the students they were expecting, these are the students they have. Institutions of higher learning must abandon the edict that claims that students have the right to fail. Educators can no longer hide behind this poor excuse to embrace the status quo. Students may have the right to fail, but they also have the right to succeed. And, it is the responsibility of educators to help them succeed.

Recommendation Number 6 – Promote evaluation of institutional programs through research.

Conducting research at community colleges is a relatively new phenomenon. At BCC_ for example, the position of institutional researcher has been in place only in the last five years. The creation of this position has increased the awareness and use of evaluation as a tool to assess and enhance programs. This growth has taken place primarily at the institutional level. A number of programs have been implemented as a result of the funding that coordinators and managers have procured based on institutional research. Few managers, however, have implemented the concept of evaluation into their

day-to-day operation. Consequently, coordinators and program managers have a tendency to maintain the process that has been ingrained in practice. At the root of this inattention to evaluation are four disconnects:

- lack of exposure to the evaluation process
- absence of a client-centered approach to service
- lack of access to institutional data, and
- lack of resolve to eliminate inefficient programs

Lack of exposure to the evaluation process – Very few managers and program coordinators attend professional conferences to expose themselves to evaluation or even professional growth within their area of expertise. This is particularly true when it comes to attending national conferences. When managers and coordinators attend professional growth activities, for the most part, they fail to put into practice what they learn. One exception to this behavior pattern was the implementation of the Student Success Seminar (Human Development 20). Even fewer managers and program coordinators enroll in graduate programs that require training in research and/or evaluation.

Absence of a client-centered approach to service – There is an attitude that permeates the student service management ranks in particular, an attitude that emphasizes that the process should make it easy for staff to conduct business. Whether the process is "client-centered" or "user friendly," in most instances, is not the driving force. Managers

justify this mentality by pointing to the large numbers of students being served and understaffing. Another typical excuse for this inertia is the belief that since they have conducted business one way for so long, that it has to be right.

Lack of access to institutional data – BCC collects much student data from the admissions application. A comparison of the BCC admissions application to that other community colleges in the state appears to indicate that BCC collects more data elements than the average a community college. Although the student data exist in the information system, accessing them is difficult. Since the software is not "user friendly," accessing the data requires computer programming skills, which few managers have the time or the inclination to acquire. Consequently, data collection and analysis as well as evaluation are channeled through the institutional researcher. When data are collected and analysis conducted, in most instances the findings are not shared outside of the program staff or the agencies that require them.

Another critical barrier to program evaluation related to institutional data is the lack of a consistent follow-up system. All student programs at BCC offer support services; however, with very few exceptions, the information system is not set up to track students who participate in the various support services; consequently, it is impossible to determine the effectiveness of these programs and their relationship to student success.

Lack of resolve to eliminate inefficient programs – A campus-specific process called Program Review at BCC requires that all programs undergo a self-evaluation process every six years. The process calls for a program coordinator to conduct an evaluation of a program. The informal and unstructured nature of the guidelines for this self-evaluation result in a lack of uniformity in the reviews of the various programs. This structure leaves room for each program coordinator to stress the positive and de-emphasize the negative. Since the evaluation is based on the honor system, the data presented is never scrutinized. Furthermore, the Program Review process has never served as the basis for the elimination of ineffective programs.

The present study represents a model which BCC can emulate to evaluate the effectiveness of new and existing programs. Three of the four disconnects related to evaluation discussed above were addressed in the study. As to the fourth disconnect, it is up to the institution to implement an effective review process that can eliminate ineffective programs. Below are the steps taken to address the first three disconnects:

- The researcher used sound quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis principles to properly evaluate the study. In addition, he has attended numerous national conferences to acquire knowledge on the latest research and trends in student support services.

- In planning and implementing the interventions the researcher and the collaborators ensured that the processes maintained a client-centered and user-friendly approach to service. The study group was kept sufficiently small to ensure quality of services based on the available staff.
- The project researcher was constantly in communication with the institutional researcher before, during, and after the planning and implementation stages of the study to ensure that the appropriate data was collected, maintained and analyzed. Finally, the findings of the study were shared not only with the project staff, but also with other key stakeholders such as the chair of the Counseling Department, counseling managers and coordinators, the vice-presidents of Academic and Student Affairs, the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees of BCC. Furthermore, the researcher is planning to share the findings at statewide and national conferences.

B. Professional/Statewide Recommendations

Recommendation Number 7 – The statewide Academic Senate should work in conjunction with the Chancellor's Office to adapt minimum qualifications for community college instructors, which include some teacher preparation training. At the very least, require in-service training in teacher education for new tenure track instructors.

As of this writing, the State of California does not require teacher education training for community college instructors. The statewide Academic Senate sets minimum qualifications standards for instructors by field, which are stated in job announcements from the 106 community colleges. These minimum standards usually require a Master's Degree in a related field. For an academic counselor, the state minimum qualifications are "Master's in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, guidance counseling, educational counseling, social work, or career development or the equivalent." There is no mention of teacher education training, even though the duties of a counselor may include teaching human/personal development courses. The minimum qualifications for a chemistry instructor are "Master's degree in chemistry or Bachelor's degree in chemistry and Master's degree in biochemistry, chemical engineering, chemical physics, physics, or molecular biology or the equivalent." As in the case of an academic counselor, and teaching positions in all of the other fields, no teacher education training is required for a chemistry instructor.

To assume that an individual with a Master's Degree has the ability to teach is tantamount to saying that a newborn has the ability to walk. It is unknown how many community college instructors are ill-prepared to teach, either because they lack experience, or the necessary teacher education training, or exposure to theories of

learning, pedagogy, and learning styles or all of the above. These deficiencies are more critical in view of the increase in community college-bound students from non-traditional populations, who, generally speaking, have different learning styles and need training in the basic skills areas.

Whatever the number of ill-prepared instructors may be, that number is not likely to decrease any time soon. The projected college enrollment increases through the year 2005 and beyond as a result of the second tidal wave of baby boomers, will most likely cause an increase in the demand for community college instructors. This pressure to hire more teachers will make it highly unlikely that the state will increase the minimum qualifications until after the second tidal wave subsides, well into the 21st Century. Should this scenario happen, the statewide Academic Senate and the legislature should collaborate on a requirement that calls for teacher education training for new tenure track teachers. The necessary funding to provide this training should accompany the new legislation.

Recommendation Number 8 – The Chancellor's Office, through the Matriculation Technical Assistance Visits conducted by the Matriculation Unit and its consultants, should scrutinize the orientation process of individual colleges to ensure that models being used not only provide information to students about the institution, but also facilitate the adjustment and bonding processes.

As seen in this study, the lecture-centered approach used in new student orientation at BCC emphasizes the cognitive and minimizes the affective aspect. While this model expedites the delivery of information, it does not advance its retention, nor does it promote bonding between students and between students and counselors/faculty. Orientation processes that emphasize the cognitive aspect at the expense of the affective domain elude the staff's responsibility to help students adjust to a new and intimidating environment.

This researcher recognizes that the Chancellor's Office can provide guidelines for implementing the matriculation process, but it cannot dictate how those guidelines ought to be implemented. I am not proposing that the Chancellor's Office impose strict formulas on how to conduct orientation. What I am recommending, however, is that the Chancellor's Office, through its representatives, ensures that practice is based on sound research on student retention and persistence, and that colleges avoid the "one-size-fits-all" approach to orientation. Tailoring orientation to the needs and learning styles of the students will make the process more effective and fulfilling for students.

In an effort to make student support services available on demand and to relieve the pressures on staff of in-person orientation, a number of community colleges are considering providing orientation on the Web. As attractive and efficient as it may sound, orientation on the Web introduces a new barrier between students, particularly

non-traditional students, and staff—the technology. Even if it were to be universally available to address the access question, the impersonal nature of the technology will be difficult for non-traditional students to overcome.

V. Conclusion

In a global perspective, this project attempted to change the BCC mindset of instructional and counseling faculty toward approaches employed in orientation and in the classroom. Given the student diversity at the community college, the "one-size-fits-all" approach to orientation and teaching does not work for all students. The lecture- or teacher-centered method may be more effective with traditional, but not with non-traditional, students. A student orientation that focuses on the cognitive aspect while ignoring the affective domain assumes that the students are equally motivated and have the same learning style, educational, and socioeconomic background. The research conducted in this area in the last 30 years has shown that students are not equally motivated, they have different learning styles and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, the teacher or lecture-centered style is a deficit approach that ignores the student's contribution to his or her own personal, psychological, and social development. It has the potential to incite feelings of alienation and could potentially promote institutional departure.

Although I promoted collaborative learning approaches through orientation and English classes, and the data appears to indicate that this pedagogy increases student satisfaction and promotes student participation, as well as social and academic integration, collaborative learning is not a panacea. Students have different learning styles. Some, such as kinesthetic learners and the socially inclined, may respond to a collaborative learning approach; others, for example auditory and visual learners, may respond more positively to a teacher or lecture-centered method. A teacher needs to gauge which teaching approach is more effective with his or her students. He or she must have a repertoire of teaching techniques, and the adaptability that will make him or her an effective teacher.

Given the research indicating that institutional departure may be the result of what happens after the students enter college rather than what transpired before (Tinto, 1993), and given the challenges of the community colleges, it behooves all stakeholders, including academic affairs, student affairs practitioners, managers and legislators, to consider implementing and supporting interventions that contribute to the development of both the cognitive and the affective domains, unless we want to emphasize the revolving door rather than the open door of community colleges.

Appendix A

Student Success Project
Orientation Agenda

Explanation of Student Success Project [Read Script] ..... 2 min.

Answer questions ..... 3 min.

Informed Consent Form ..... 2 min.

Ice Breaker: What is your best hope and worst fear as you begin your college experience? (Additional topic: What questions do you have as you begin your college experience?) [Have students write their answers/questions or concerns on a piece of paper. Explain that they do not have to write their name on the paper. Collect papers ..... 15 min.

Introductions of faculty, counselors, and student ..... 5 min.

Brief presentation on student topics ..... 10 min.

Time management. [Go over student agendas.] ..... 10 min.

General education vs. major requirements. [California Master Plan and IGETC] ..... 10 min.

Financial aid ..... 3 min.

Presentation of case studies ..... 2 min.

Small group discussion ..... 15 min.

Reconvene and report on case studies ..... 15 min.

Break [Announce 5 minutes] ..... 10 min.

Review
- Drop deadlines;
- How to add and drop classes;
- Class withdrawal and probationary policies;
- How to read the schedule of classes; and
- Book purchasing process ..... 10 min.

Current student and alumni presentations ..... 15 min.

Discuss English and Student Success Seminar classes ..... 3 min.

Show faculty video and discuss the Code of Academic Conduct policy ..... 10 min.

Placement Scores and Prerequisites ..... 5 min.

Develop the Student Educational Plan	**30 min.**
Discuss future activities for SSP (i.e. follow-up orientation, career advisement, Early Alert workshops, etc.)	**5 min.**
Student evaluations	**10 min.**
Explain enrollment process	5 min.
Dismiss students to fair. [Assist individual students with SEPs and answer questions	15 min.
Total Time	**3:30 hrs.**

Appendix B

Student Success Project
Orientation Evaluation

The staff at Bay Community College (BCC) is committed to providing the best orientation possible for students. We need your help in planning future orientations. Please help us by answering the questions below. Use the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Somewhat Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Somewhat Agree	5 = Strongly Agree

1) The information I received at orientation will help me succeed at Bay Community College. ____

2) The information was presented in a clear manner. ____

3) The information presented was too much for me to remember. ____

4) I left the orientation feeling that I had gained the knowledge I had hoped for. ____

5) The counselor(s) and teachers answered my question(s) thoroughly and professionally. ____

6) Teachers, counselors and other staff were approachable/friendly. ____

7) The staff took a personal interest in my academic future. ____

8) I enjoyed the student involvement in orientation activities. ____

9) My opinions were taken into consideration and my voice was heard. ____

10) I plan to use the student planner/agenda that I received at orientation. ____

11) Were there any activities that you found particularly useful?

If yes, which activities?

_____

12) Were there any activities that you found particularly useless?

If yes, which activities?

_____

13) Were there any activities that you found particularly enjoyable?

If yes, which activities?

_____

14) Were there any activities that you found particularly unpleasant?

If yes, which activities?

_____

15) Were there any questions you did not get an answer for? If yes, please specify.

_____

_____

16) What grade would you give the orientation overall? A B C D Fail

17) PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Control Group Orientation Evaluation

Fall 1998 Bay Community College Orientation Evaluation

Dear Student,

The following information in this form is being collected as a part of a study conducted by Bay Community College (BCC). The purpose of this inquiry is to learn about your experience at orientation. Your participation in this study is being solicited in order to evaluate the effectiveness of orientation and plan future orientation sessions by taking into consideration student impressions and input. Your willingness to participate is important and very much appreciated. Please be assured that your responses will remain CONFIDENTIAL. Thank you very much.

Please complete and return this evaluation only if you participated in orientation.

Use the following scale to rate each of the statements below:

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Somewhat Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Somewhat Agree	5 = Strongly Agree

1. The information I received at orientation will help me succeed at Bay Community College. ____
2. The information was presented in a clear manner. ____
3. The information presented was too much for me to remember. ____
4. I left the orientation feeling that I had gained the knowledge I had hoped for. ____
5. The counselor(s) and teachers answered my questions thoroughly and professionally. ____

6. Teachers, counselors and other staff were approachable/friendly. _____

7. The staff took a personal interest in my academic future. _____

8. I enjoyed the student involvement in orientation activities. _____

9. My opinions were taken into consideration and my voice was heard. _____

10. I plan to use the ***Student Planning Guide for Success*** that I received at orientation. _____

PLEASE PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS BELOW

11. Were there any activities that you found particularly useful? Yes No

If yes, which activities?

_____

12. Were there any activities that you found particularly useless? Yes No

If yes, which activities?

_____

13. Were there any activities that you found particularly enjoyable? Yes No

If yes, which activities?

_____

14. Were there any activities that you found particularly unpleasant? Yes No

If yes, which activities?

_____

15. Were there any questions you did not get an answer for? Yes No

If yes, please specify.

_____

16. Was there any information you found particularly useful? Yes No

If so, which information?

_____

17. Was there any information you found particularly confusing? Yes No

If so, which information?

_____

18. What grade would you give the orientation overall? **[PLEASE CIRCLE ONE]**
A B C D Fail

19. PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

Appendix D

Control Group Orientation Evaluation Cover Letter

August 19, 1998

Dear Student,

As a future transfer student, we would like to congratulate you on choosing Bay Community College (BCC). As you know, BCC prides itself at being the number one transfer institution to the University of California. We are number one because we are not complacent; we are constantly looking for ways to improve student services.

You may have participated in an orientation session that introduced you to the many student support services available at BCC, as well as policies and procedures, which will be instrumental in helping you reach your transfer goal.

We are very interested in finding out what students think about student services at BCC, particularly student orientation. You have been selected at random to receive a short evaluation form, which will give you the opportunity to tell us your impressions of the orientation. We hope you will take a few minutes to fill out this form and mail it back to us in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank you,

Vice President
Student Affairs

Appendix E

CCSEQ Cover Letter

Dear Student,

One of BCC's goals is to identify the kinds of experiences and involvement that promote your success as a college student. Understanding your collegiate experiences and involvement will assist BCC's administrators and faculty members in developing and improving programs and services to better assist your learning and development.

Your direct input about your personal background, collegiate experiences, and your satisfaction with these experiences are *critical* in understanding how to promote college student success at Bay Community College. By completing the enclosed *Community College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CCSEQ)*, you will be providing us with that critical information. Be assured that your responses will remain strictly confidential.

We know your time is valuable and limited. However, taking 20 –30 minutes to complete the CCSEQ will certainly not be time gone to waste. Please complete this questionnaire and return it to BCC's Matriculation Office within 2 weeks. A postage-paid envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

John Gonzalez, Dean
Matriculation and Special Programs

Appendix F

In-depth Interview Protocol
Bay Community College
Student Success Project

ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE

1. How smooth has it been for you to go from high school to college?

2. What made it smooth or difficult?

3. What could have made it smoother?

4. How do you feel the Student Success Project (SSP) helped you to go from high school to college?

5. If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently to help you with your adjustment to college?

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

6. Outside of orientation, with what other SSP activities have you been involved?

1. The Get Together
2. Orientation Follow-up
3. Career Workshops
4. Dr. Chavez's (a pseudonym) presentation
5. Mentor-mentee luncheon

7. Have you participated in campus-sponsored activities outside of the SSP, such as on-campus clubs and organizations, field trips to other college/university campuses? If so, please name the activities and/or organizations.

8. How did you find out about these activities and/or organizations?

9. [If not involved.] What kept you from being involved either in SSP or BCC activities in general?

10. What could the SSP staff have done to encourage/assist your participation in more activities? (Possible follow-up question: What activities could the staff have organized to increase your involvement?)

11. Of those SSP and campus-wide activities that you were involved in, which activities did you get the **most** out of and why?

12. Which activities did you get the **least** out of and why?

13. Which activities helped you the **most** with your classes?

14. Which activities helped you the **least** with your classes?

15. Which activities helped you to meet people on campus?

16. Which activities helped you to get to know the campus better (i.e. knowing where to go, who to talk to?)

CONNECTEDNESS

17. How connected did you feel to this college before you started attending BCC?

18. How connected do you feel **to BCC now?**

19. How connected do you feel **to other students?**

20. How connected do you feel **to staff and faculty?**

21. How connected do you feel **to other programs or on-campus organizations?**

22. How did the Project help you to feel connected?

23. How did the Project staff help you feel connected?

24. Is there any activity, interaction or contact with the staff that you consider pleasant? If so, what is it and why?

25. Is there any activity, interaction or contact with the staff that was unpleasant? If so, what is it and why?

26. Were there any activities or contacts from the staff that you felt uncomfortable with? (Possible clarification question: Were there any activities or contacts from the staff that you felt invaded your privacy? If so, what were they?

27. (Ask this question only if the answer above does not elicit the response pertaining to telephone contacts: Did the staff ever call you at home or leave messages at home to remind you of activities and/or appointments? If so, how did you feel about these contacts?)

28. Are there any activities that you wish the Project staff could organize? If so, what are they?

ORIENTATION

29. To be considered for the Project you had to participate in an orientation that was different from the regular orientation. At the beginning of the SSP orientation you were told that you could choose to go to a regular orientation. Since you were told that it was going to be longer and different from the regular orientation, why did you choose to participate in the SSP orientation?

30. How effective do you feel the SSP orientation was at providing you information to help you succeed at BCC?

31. How effective was the SSP orientation in helping you find out where to go for help, whom to talk to?

32. How effective was the SSP orientation in helping you **feel connected to BCC?**

33. How effective was the SSP orientation in helping you **feel connected to other students?**

34. How effective was the SSP orientation in helping you **feel connected to staff, including faculty?**

COUNSELING

35. Did you ever meet with the counselor? If so, how many times or how often?

36. If yes, how effective and/or helpful was she?

37. If no, why not? (Why didn't you meet with the counselor?)

ENGLISH CLASSES

38. Which English classes did you qualify for? [English1; English 21A; or English 81 & 83]

39. Did you enroll in an SSP English class, if yes, why. If no, why not?

ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN SSP ENGLISH CLASSES

40. Did you like your English class? If yes, what did you like about the class? If no, what did you dislike about the class?

41. In your opinion, did your English teacher use different techniques with this class compared to other English classes you have taken in the past?

42. Can you describe some of the activities and/or assignments that your English teacher tried with the class? [If the interviewee does not mention group activities/cooperative learning, or other similar descriptors, ask the interviewee whether the teacher encouraged the students to work in groups.]

43. Did you enjoy the class activities and assignments? If yes, why. If no, why not?

44. Do you think your classmates enjoyed the class activities and assignments?

45. How well do you know the students in your English class? How well do you think your classmates know you?

46. Do you think your English teacher took an interest in your learning? Did your English teacher take an interest in all the students' learning?

47. Did your English class help you grow academically? If yes, how?

48. Do you think that the group or cooperative activities used in your English class helped you feel more comfortable associating with other students (**in your English class and with other students in general**)? If yes, how?

49. In your opinion, how effective was your English teacher in teaching you the subject matter?

ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 20

50. Did you like your Human Development 20 class? If yes, what did you like about the class? If no, what did you dislike about the class?

51. Can you describe some of the activities and/or assignments that your Human Development 20 teacher tried with the class?

52. Do you think your Human Development 20 teacher took an interest in your learning? Did your Human Development 20 teacher take an interest in all the students' learning?

53. Did your Human Development 20 class help you grow personally? If yes, how?

54. Did your Human Development 20 class help you grow academically? If yes, how?

55. Did your Human Development 20 class help you make the adjustment to college? If yes, how?

56. Is there an activity and/or an assignment in your Human Development 20 class that stands out in your mind as either a positive or a negative experience? If yes, please tell me about it.

57. In your opinion, how effective was your Human Development 20 teacher in teaching you the subject matter?

OPEN-ENDED/SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

58. Do you have any suggestions you would like to make that would help to improve the Project?

223

Appendix G

In-depth Interview Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
GENERAL CAMPUS HUMAN SUBJECT PROTECTION COMMITTEE

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

In-depth Interviews

Community Colleges: Open Door or Revolving Door?

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by John Gonzalez, principal investigator, B.A., M.S., from the Graduate School of Education and Information Services at the University of California, Los Angeles. John Gonzalez is also the Dean of Matriculation & Special Programs at Bay Community College (BCC). John McNeil, Ph.D., a professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Services at UCLA, is the faculty sponsor for John Gonzalez. Professor McNeil can be reached at (310) 825-1791.

The results of this study will contribute toward the dissertation of the principal investigator. You were selected as a possible participant in this particular section of the study because you are a first-time college student at BCC, your goal is to transfer, and you have been a member of the ***Student Success Project*** since Summer '98 when you participated in a special new student orientation. Your participation in this section of the study is not a required activity for new BCC students or for ***Student Success Project*** participants. A student's decision not to participate in this portion of the study or withdrawal from this portion of the study at any time will have no effect upon his/her standing at the College or in the ***Student Success Project***.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

224

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the student support programs being implemented are effective in reducing the percentage of probationary students at Bay Community College.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this portion of the study, we would ask you to do the following:

6. Participate in an in-depth interview with the principal investigator, which will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes. During the interview the principal investigator will ask you questions about your

    1. Adjustment to college;
    2. Involvement both within the ***Student Success Project*** and in campus-wide activities;
    3. Connectedness to the college and/or the staff;
    4. Experience with the counseling staff in the ***Student Success Project***;
    5. Experience with group activities in your ***Student Success Project*** English class (if applicable); and
    6. Experience with the Human Development 20 class (if applicable).

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

We do not anticipate any risks to the participants in this project; and because none of the questions are of a personal nature, we do not anticipate any discomfort for the participants either.

POTENTIAL BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Having been associated with the project from its inception in Summer '98, the participants will potentially benefit from their experience by having a sense of satisfaction in having contributed to the overall analysis of the project.

Future first-time college students at Bay Community College will potentially benefit from the participants' contribution through enhanced student support programs and teachers' use of more student participatory techniques.

Bay Community College, other community colleges, and colleges in general may benefit from the results of this project. They will be able to replicate the project and implement the theories of student involvement, academic and social integration on their own campuses to promote student success.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Each participant in the in-depth interview portion of this project will receive $20 as payment for his/her time invested in the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, in general, and through the in-depth interview process, in particular, and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You may choose whether to be a part of this or any portion of the study or not. If you volunteer to be in this portion of the study, you may withdraw at any time without affecting your status at or relationship with Bay Community College or the ***Student Success Project***. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't wish to answer and you will still remain in the ***Student Success Project*** unless you wish to withdraw from the study as well.

The principal investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please feel free to contact John Gonzalez at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or visit him in his office on campus at 3900 Pioneer Boulevard, Bay City, CA.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the Office for Protection of Research subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant (Please print)

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

227

Appendix H

Sample Student Essay
English 1

My daddy was the best dad anybody could have had. The only thing was he had a really serious problem. A drinking problem. I overlooked this when I was young. I thought sure he often drank on weekends and sometimes even after work, but he couldn't be an alcoholic. Alcoholics were supposed to be mean people who abused and hit their children. Our father never had hit my little sister or me. Actually he spoiled us rotten. I have many happy childhood memories with my family. Those days were really fun and memorable.

My father and I had a really close relationship when I was younger and most of my memorable moments include him. I was always daddy's little gir. the one he used to carry on his shoulders at parades in order to see better. I remember feeling so proud riding on his shoulders as if I was on top of the world. My daddy was always there for me when it counted the most. He was the one who taught me how to ride my first bike and even though I fell off many times he always kept encouraging me to keep on trying. He also was the one who taught me how to play catch and how to throw a football. I guess you can say I was a little bit of a tomboy. I would go everywhere with my father

and even watch football games with him. Every day was a new adventure. There was never a boring day that passed because my father planned something new for each day whether it was going to the park or just staying home watching Disney movies. I always counted down the minutes until my father would come home from work knowing he always brought my little sister and I a treat. We never knew what he was going to bring us and that was the best part. We would have guessing games as to what it would be. My mom would always join in on the game also. Most of the time it was candy. Gummie worms, candy bars, and lollipops. Other days he would bring us coloring books, crayons or play dough.

It was around the fourth grade that one particular incident made my whole views on my father change. I remember coming home one day after school with my best friend. She was coming over to see our new puppy we had just gotten and then we were going to do some homework together. My father answered the door for us and as I saw him I knew he was drunk. His eyes were blood shot and his breath reeked of alcohol. I suggested to my best friend to change our plans around a little bit and go to her house instead, but she didn't notice my father was drunk at that time and had insisted to stay. She had really wanted to see our puppy. I called our puppy's name out loud so that he could come but my father said, "Why are you calling that stupid mutt for? Don't you

know I kicked him outside because he used the bathroom in the house!" I looked over at my mother for support. She tried calming him down a little and talking him into going to their room. When she was leading him by the arm to the room, he almost fell twice. He couldn't even walk straight. I had never been so embarrassed before in my whole life. I wanted so badly to crawl under a shell and never come out. At that moment I felt tears coming to my eyes. My best friend finally realized why I had wanted to leave to her house instead. She hugged me and told me everything was going to be alright and that she understood. She was very supportive and promised she wouldn't mention what happened to any of our friends and for that I was thankful.

That one incident made me see my father in a new light and forced me to realize that he did in fact have a serious problem. After that day I found myself drifting away from my father. I started keeping count of all the times he would get drunk and would cry myself to sleep everyday that he was. I remember just wanting him to stop drinking. I never wanted him to embarrass me once more. I no longer remembered the good times. I pushed them aside and out of my memory. Al that I could remember were the bad times. Waking up to the sound of someone throwing up in the restroom, the shaky hands just waiting to get a hold of a just one last beer. The worst were at family parties when he would "accidentally" drink too much and end up making an idiot of himself. I never

really told anyone how I was feeling. I felt no one could relate or worse that no one would care. I didn't feel like telling my mother or sister how I felt. My father's drinking problem didn't seem to affect them as much as it did me.

I finally confided in my mother one day because I was feeling really sad. I thought my dad didn't love us anymore because of his drinking. We had a long talk that day. She told me that our dad would never stop loving us. He just had a problem that he couldn't control. She said my father had started drinking before my sister and I were born, but that it had in fact gotten worse after his youngest brother, our uncle, had passed away. I felt really bad for him at that moment and sad that he had turned to alcohol to face his problems. That talk did make me feel better though. I now knew it wasn't anything my sister or I had done wrong for him to start drinking and that he did in fact still love us.

Today it is many years later. I am now older and have read many books on alcoholism. My father still drinks but not as severely. I realized he will only stop when he truly wants to. It is always that way with alcoholics. Regardless of all this, I still love my daddy. I guess I had never really stopped. I find myself thinking back to the good old days now. The memories I had pushed out of my mind are coming back stronger than ever. The memories often bring a tear and a smile to my face. I will never forget them.

Appendix I

Student Success Project Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
GENERAL CAMPUS HUMAN SUBJECT PROTECTION COMMITTEE

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
First-time College Students

Community Colleges: Open Door or Revolving Door?

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by John Gonzalez, principal investigator, B.A., M.S., from the Graduate School of Education and Information Services at the University of California, Los Angeles. John Gonzalez is also the Assistant Dean of Matriculation at Bay Community College (BCC). John McNeal, Ph.D., a professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Services at UCLA, is the faculty sponsor for John Gonzalez. Professor McNeal can be reached at (310) 825-8344.

The results of this study will contribute toward the dissertation of the principal investigator. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a first-time college student at BCC and your goal is to transfer. Your participation in this research is not a required activity for new students at BCC. A student's decision not to participate in this study or withdrawal from the study at any time will have no effect upon his/her standing at the college.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the student support programs being implemented are effective in reducing the percentage of probationary students at Bay Community College.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in a special orientation designed to provide you with information about student support services, policies and procedures at Bay Community College, and other important information that will help you succeed at BCC. The delivery method at the special orientation is designed to ensure that you feel connected to other students, faculty, counselors, and the college.

Participation in additional student support services and classes is optional—students may choose not to participate in additional support services or classes but may choose to participate in assessment only. Participants may

- Enroll in a specially designed English class according to the level of proficiency indicated by your score in the placement test if the classes are offered at the time that is convenient for you and you choose to enroll in them.
- Participate in follow-up activities, such as study skills, career, and student educational plan workshops, and social activities to enable you to maximize your involvement in your own personal development.
- Complete student inventories and surveys that will provide the principal investigator, the counselors, and the teachers more information about you that will help them design the appropriate support program for each individual student. Another purpose of the inventories and surveys is to identify the areas where the support programs could be improved.

In addition, the principal investigator and counselors will review your transcript at the end of the fall, winter, and spring sessions to determine your academic progress, identify a probationary status, suggest classes for the following session, and determine the effectiveness of the various interventions.

The total duration of this project would be one year or as long as you are a student at Bay Community College and choose to participate. The special orientation will last approximately three hours and follow-up activities will be scheduled throughout the fall and spring semesters of 1998-1999, most likely on a bi-weekly basis. All activities will take place on campus and they will be conducted by counselors, teachers, and specially trained assistants.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

We do not anticipate any risks in this project; however, by the nature of some of the activities which will require the participants to associate with counselors, faculty, and other students, it is possible that some students will feel social discomfort.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The project participants will potentially benefit from their experience by enhancing critical thinking, basic and study skills. Their participation may enhance their retention in college and overall student success.

Bay Community College, other community colleges, and colleges in general may benefit from the results of this project. They will be able to replicate and test the theories of student involvement, as well as academic and social integration, on their own campuses to promote student success.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

We wish we could provide payment to participants; however, the budget does not allow it.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without affecting your status at or relationship with Bay Community College. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact John Gonzalez at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or visit him in his office on campus at 3900 Pioneer Blvd., Bay City CA.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, 2107 Ueberroth Building, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

235

Appendix J

Orientation Case Studies

Case #1

Karla is going to enroll in college for the first time this fall. Although she lives at home, she gets very little financial support from her family. Her parents did not want her to attend college; instead they wanted her to start working so she could help support the family. She has three younger brothers and one sister. Karla started working at the age of 17 and currently holds a part-time retail job, which she intends to quit as soon as she finds a full-time job. Her high school career counselor suggested that she attend BCC and major in cosmetology so she can acquire some skills and start making money to help support the family. Although she realizes that majoring in cosmetology would teach her some skills that would help her get a job, she would like to be a physician's assistant instead.

Her part-time job prevented Karla from attending orientation, so her friend, Susan, helped her to plan her schedule. She is enrolled in 16 units and the fall semester begins next week. This is Karla's schedule:

Course	Units
Speech 1	3
Cosmetology	6
Math 20	5
Art	2

Questions

1. Given her work schedule, what would you advise Karla regarding her academic schedule?

2. What does Karla need to do to achieve her long-range goal as a physician's assistant, while meeting her immediate financial need? What would you advise her?

3. What kinds of student support services should Karla consider and why?

Optional Question

4. What advice would you give Karla in choosing her classes in the future?

Case #2

Today is the first day of the fall semester. Tony and Jeff graduated from high school at the end of the spring semester. They decided to have some fun this summer, so they spent a lot of time on the playground and at the beach. They were going to look for a job, but decided at the last minute to enroll at BCC instead. They are told at the Admissions and Records office that there are no more appointments for the math and English placement tests and that they cannot submit an application for admission unless they obtain an "add" card from a teacher. Since they don't have money to purchase a schedule of classes, they are directed to the "board" behind Admissions and Records to "check out" the classes that are still open. They find that some interesting classes are still open, such as child development, human development, physical education, and drawing. Although one of the child development classes that is still open has a prerequisite which Tony and Jeff do not have, they go ahead and get an "add" card from the instructor. They also learn that sometimes students can successfully enroll in closed classes by "crashing." They decide to "crash" several classes, including History 11, Economics 1, and Business 5. At the end of the day, Tony and Jeff feel fortunate that they were able to enroll in 12 units so they can be considered "full-time," and thus continue to get a discount on their parents' auto insurance.

Course	Units
History 11	3
Economics 1	3
Business 5	3
Child Development 2	3

Questions

1. Identify some of the potential difficulties that Tony and Jeff might encounter during their first and subsequent semesters at BCC. What could potentially go wrong with the kind of schedule they have?

2. What would you advise them to assist them in becoming successful students?

3. What kinds of student support services should they seek and why?

Case #3

It is Wednesday of the 3rd week of the fall semester. Yvonne, who just enrolled at BCC for the first time this semester, has just learned that her father was laid off from his job and that although she can continue to live at home, her parents won't be able to help her financially. Also, her mother, who has never worked before and who was taking care of Yvonne's one-year-old daughter, will have to get a job to help support the family.

Yvonne's goal is to transfer to either a UC or a Cal State and obtain a BA in political science. She hopes one day to become a lawyer. She is enrolled in 16 units and is doing well in all of her classes. This is her schedule

Course	Units
English 1	3
Political Science 1	3
History 12	3
Mathematics 52	3
Economics 1	3
PE	1

Yvonne is familiar with word processing and spreadsheets as a result of having taken some computer classes in high school; therefore, she decided to look for an office job. She was offered a part-time job at the company where one of her friends works. She also found a job on campus through the Job Center, which pays slightly less than the off-campus job.

Questions

1. What does Yvonne need to consider doing about her class schedule given what you know about her family situation, and why?

2. Which job would you advise Yvonne to take, the off-campus or the on-campus job, and why?

3. What kinds of student support services should Yvonne seek, and why?

4. Is Yvonne taking the appropriate classes given her goal, why or why not?

Case #4

Tommy Trojan, who lives in Van Nuys, just finished his first year at Bay Community College. He wants to major in engineering and transfer to USC. However, he was disqualified for lack-of-progress at the end of the spring semester. He completed only 10 units during his first year at BCC and has a 1.96 cumulative GPA (grade point average). Last semester Tommy received an "F" in Math 20 for the second time and a "W" in English 21B. He works 25 hours per week at Staples. His schedule is 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In addition, Tommy was president of the "Trojans of Tomorrow" club in the spring semester.

Questions

1. What does Tommy need to do in order to continue to attend BCC given his academic record?

2. What classes would you suggest for Tommy to take in the fall semester, if he is allowed to continue to attend BCC, and why? Given his work schedule, how many classes (or how many units) maximum would you suggest for Tommy?

Class	Units

3. If it were possible to adjust Tommy's work situation, what alternatives might you suggest?

4. There is a good chance that Tommy will not be eligible to continue to be president of the "Trojans of Tomorrow" club as a result of his academic status. What should he do to refocus his energy and time?

239

Appendix K

SSP Description Script

Script for Student Success Project: New BCC Student Orientation

You have been randomly selected to participate in a research project that will help us determine whether especially designed student support services can help us promote student success and reduce the number of probationary students at Bay Community College (BCC). Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and a student's unwillingness to participate in the study, withdrawal at any point from the study, or refusal to answer questions will in no way affect the student's status or relationship with BCC.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in an orientation that is similar in content to the regular orientation, but different in the delivery method. The delivery method in the research study will incorporate more student participatory kinds of activities. The purpose of the orientation is to provide new BCC students with the information about student support services, policies and procedures and other information that will help them succeed. Participants are all first-time college students whose goal is to transfer. Being with students with similar goals will facilitate the design of an intervention program that is tailored to the students' needs and increase student success at BCC. All activities will take place on campus and they will be conducted by counselors, teachers, and specially trained assistants.

There are other components in which you may choose to participate; however, you may remain in the program even though you only participate in orientation.

Other components of the program include enrollment in especially designed English classes according to your placement test score. As

with orientation, the content of English classes will be similar to regular English classes; the difference will be in the delivery method. One of the purposes of the English classes is to create a student participatory environment. Enrollment in English classes is also strictly voluntary.

Additional follow-up activities will include study skills and career workshops, student educational plan workshops, and social activities to enable you to maximize your involvement in your own personal development.

As participant in the study, you will be asked to complete some student surveys and inventories. The purpose of these instruments is threefold: 1) help design an appropriate support program for each individual student, 2) identify the areas where the support program could be improved, and 3) determine the effectiveness of the various interventions. As with all other activities, completion of surveys and inventories is voluntary.

Finally, the principal investigator, John Gonzalez, Dean of Matriculation and Special Programs, and the counselors in the program will review the academic transcript of participants at the end of the fall, winter, and spring sessions to determine their academic progress, detect a probationary status if one exists, suggest classes for the following session, and determine the effectiveness of the various interventions. The review of transcripts will remain strictly confidential and only the counselors and the principal investigator will have access to this information.

Statistical analysis of the results of this study will be shared with BCC personnel to determine whether the interventions being tested should be adopted with the general student population at BCC. Statistical analysis of this study will also be shared with personnel at other community colleges in California to advocate intervention programs that promote student success.

At this point we would like to answer any questions you may have about the program.

[Pause and answer questions.]

If there are no more questions we would like to ask you to decide whether you would like to participate in the program or not. Those of you who do not wish to participate in the program, please raise your hand and we will escort you to a room where a regular orientation is taking place. Those of you who wish to participate, please remain in your seats.

[Pause for a few minutes until all non-participants have left the room.]

We will now distribute an informed consent; please take a few minutes to read it.

[Pause for a few minutes to give students enough time to read the informed consent.]

If you agree, please sign the informed consent. If you have any questions, please raise your hand and I'll be glad to answer your questions. If there are any students who would like to decline to participate at this time, please raise your hand.

[If any students wish to withdraw from participation, have these students escorted to a regular orientation. Collect all informed consents and begin the orientation.]

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